SAKURA TAISEN™

ART BY IKKU MASA • ORIGINAL CHARACTERS BY KOSUKE FUJISHIMA
STORY BY OHJI HIROI

TOKYOPOP®

SAKURA TAISEN™

よん 4

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TOKYOPOP®

SAKURA TAISEN

Manga
Action/Romance
US $9.99
CAN $12.99

Ensign Ogami is injured during a showdown with Setsuna. Nonetheless, the show must go on, and the Flower Team begins rehearsing for their new play. Meanwhile, Ogami finds the time to try to cheer up Maria and help her recover from the nightmares. But when Maria decides to seek revenge for her lover, who will protect her from her own foolish ambitions?!

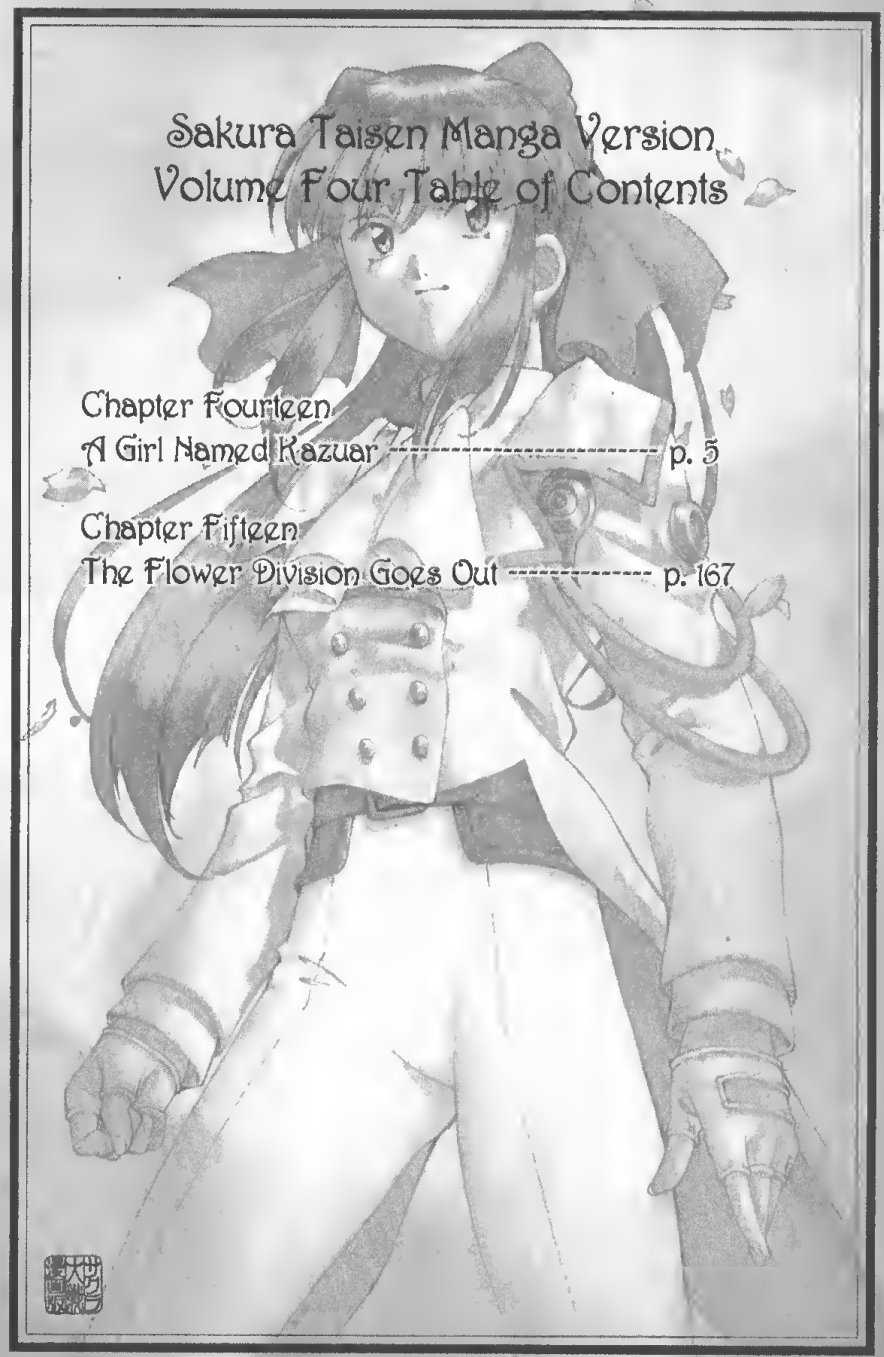
SAKURA TAISEN™

Vol. 4

Story by
Ohji Hiroi

Art by
Ikku Masa

Characters by
Kosuke Fujishima



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Sakura Wars

サクラ大戦

Manga Version

4

Chapter Fourteen - A Girl Named Kazuar

Sakura Taisen Vol.4

Story by Ohji Hiroi

Art by Ikku Masa

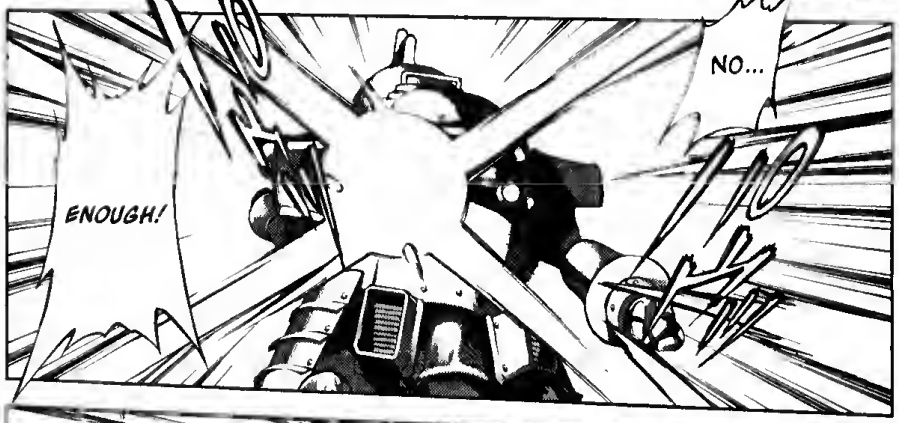
Characters by Kosuke Fujishima

IS THAT SO?
AH HAH!

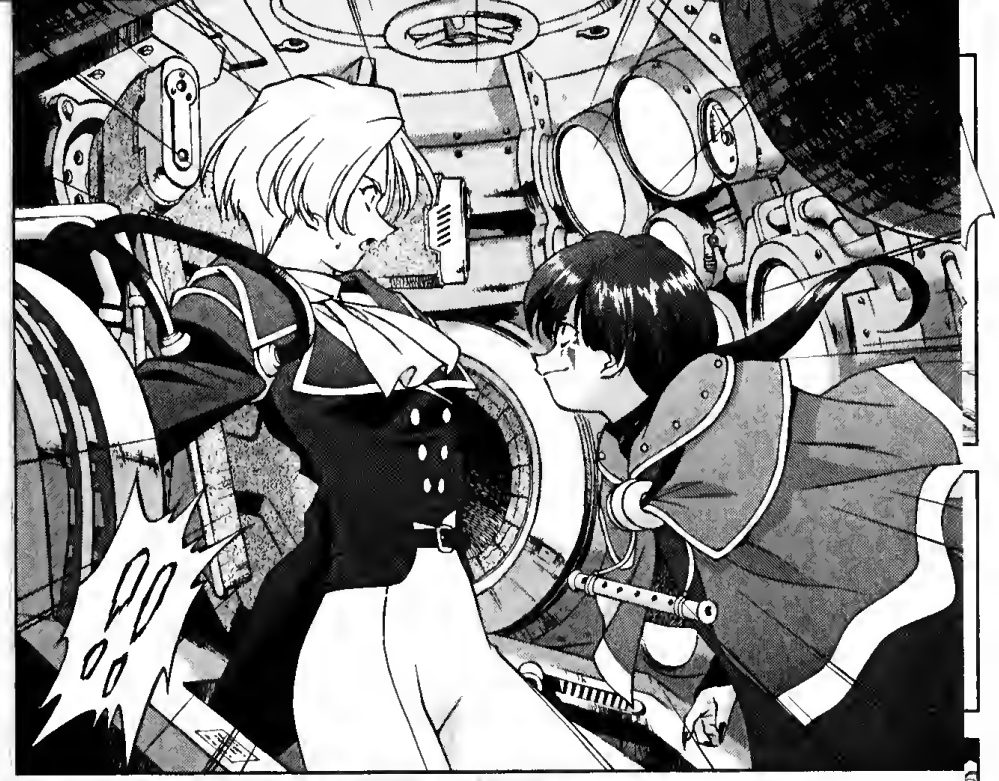
Waaaah!

THAT'S KIND OF UNHEALTHY, YOU KNOW.
YOU JUST CAN'T FORGET YOUR DEAD CAPTAIN, CAN YOU?

...KAZUAR.
IT'S A BLIGHT ON YOUR NAME...


ENOUGH!
NO...

HA HA HA HA HA!

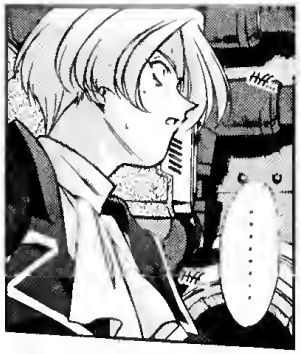


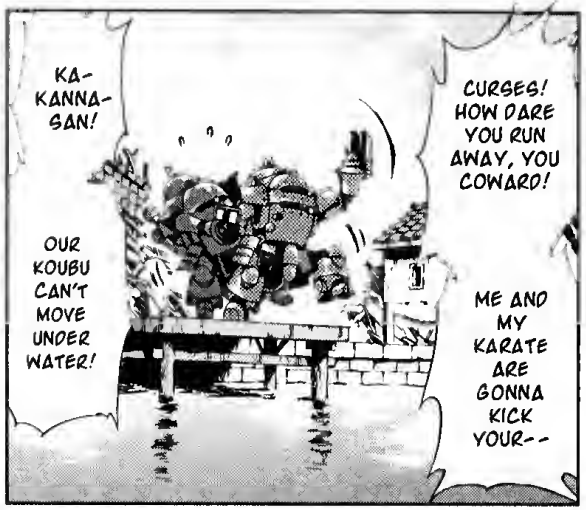
THIS IS MY SPECIAL ABILITY.
HUH HUH HUH! SURPRISED?

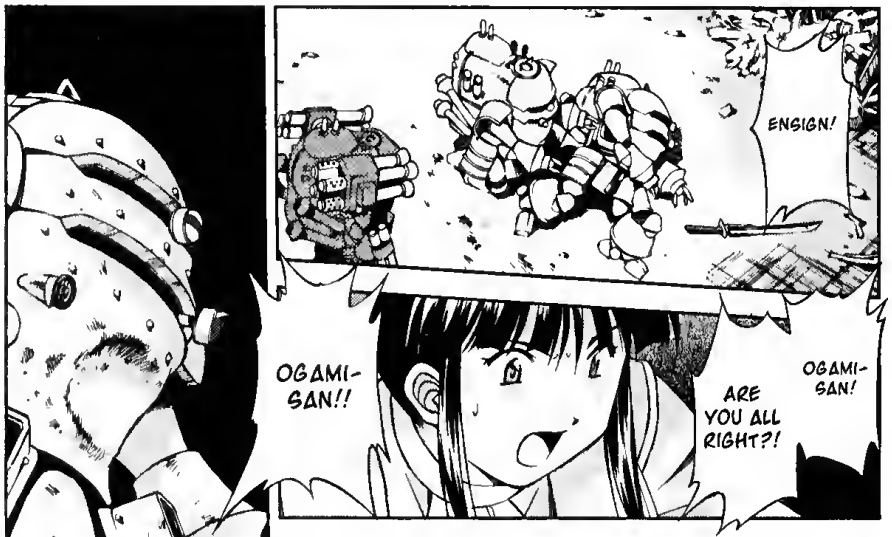
WHA...

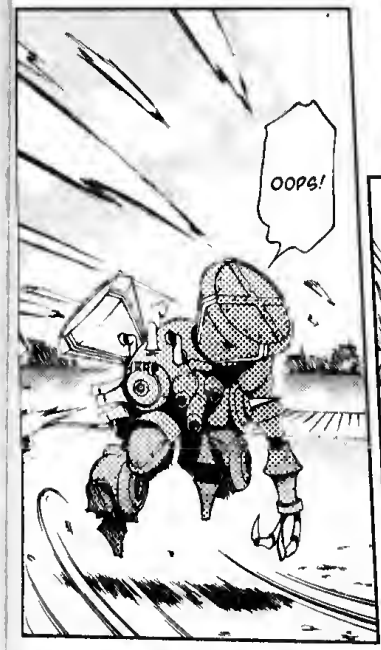
WHAT?!

LIKE YOURS, LADY.
ALTHOUGH, IT ONLY WORKS ON THE WEAK OF SPIRIT, WHO LEAVE SPACE IN THEIR HEART FOR ME TO SLIP INTO.

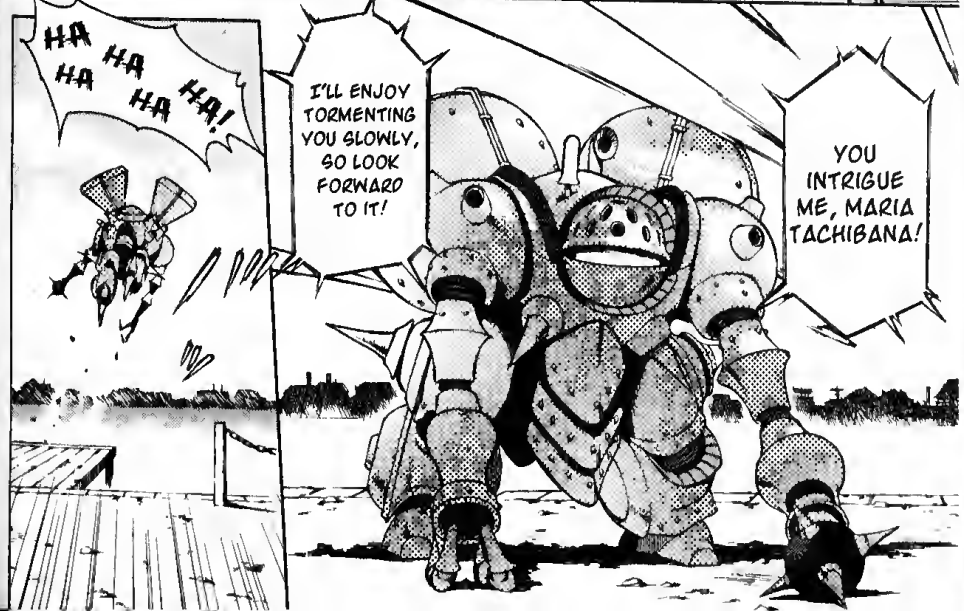

HH

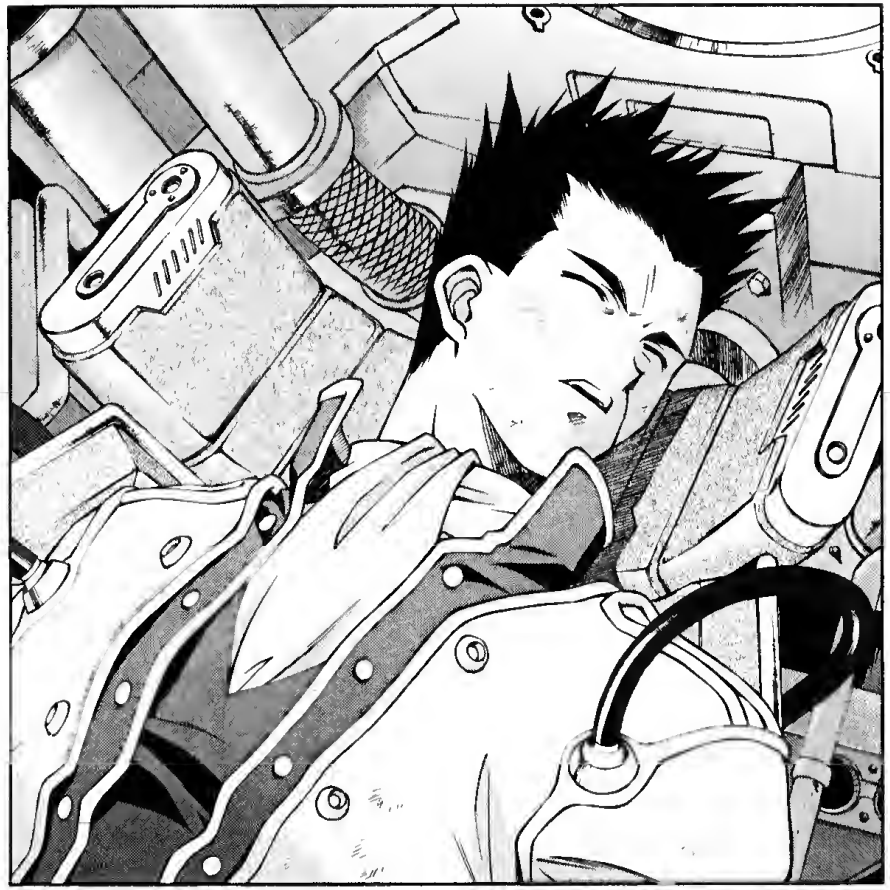

KA-
KANNA-
SAN!
OUR
KOUBU
CAN'T
MOVE
UNDER
WATER!
CURSES!
HOW DARE
YOU RUN
AWAY, YOU
COWARD!
ME AND
MY
KARATE
ARE
GONNA
KICK
YOUR--

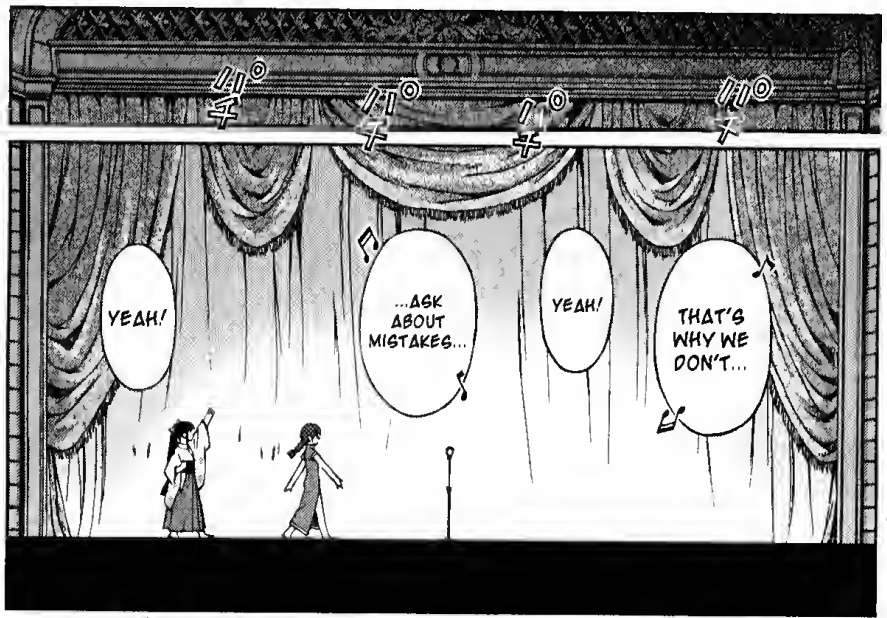

ENSIGN!
OGAMI-
SAN!!
ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?!
OGAMI-
SAN!

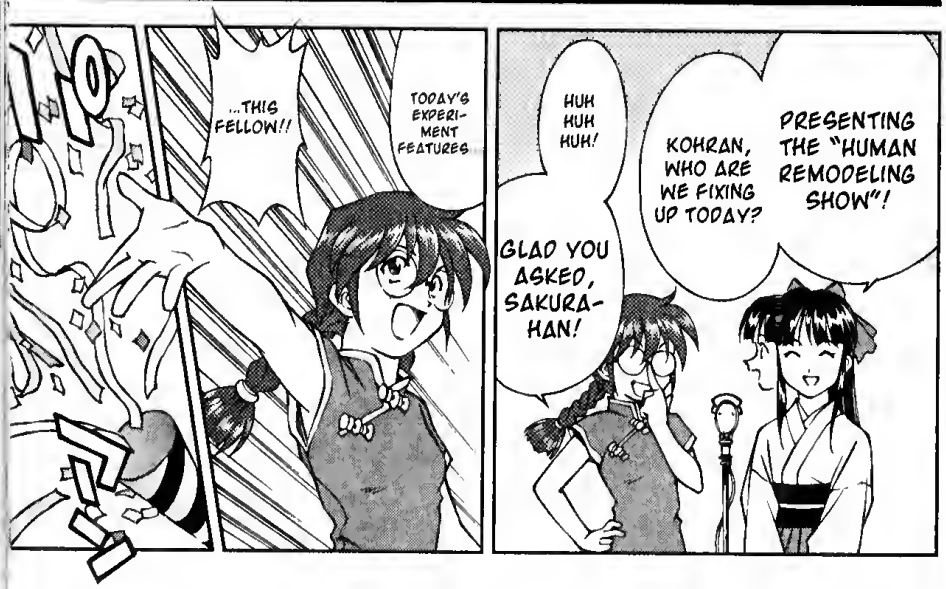

OOPS!

SON OF
A--!!


HA HA
HA HA HA!
I'LL ENJOY
TORMENTING
YOU SLOWLY,
SO LOOK
FORWARD
TO IT!
YOU
INTRIGUE
ME, MARIA
TACHIBANA!



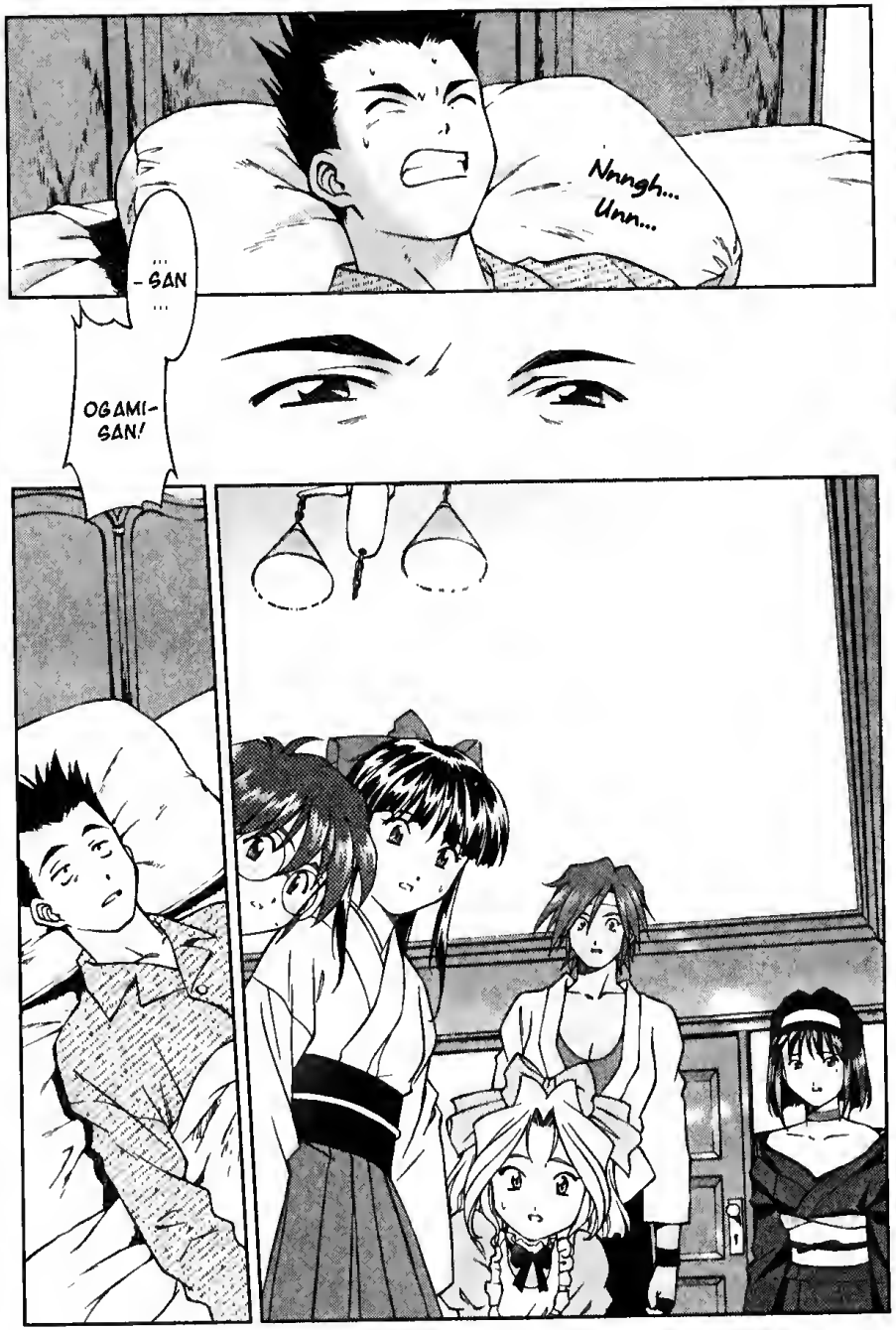

YEAH!
...ASK ABOUT MISTAKES...
YEAH!
THAT'S WHY WE DON'T...


...THIS FELLOW!!
TODAY'S EXPERIMENT FEATURES
HUH HUH HUH!
GLAD YOU ASKED, SAKURA-HAN!
KOHRAN, WHO ARE WE FIXING UP TODAY?
PRESENTING THE "HUMAN REMODELING SHOW"!

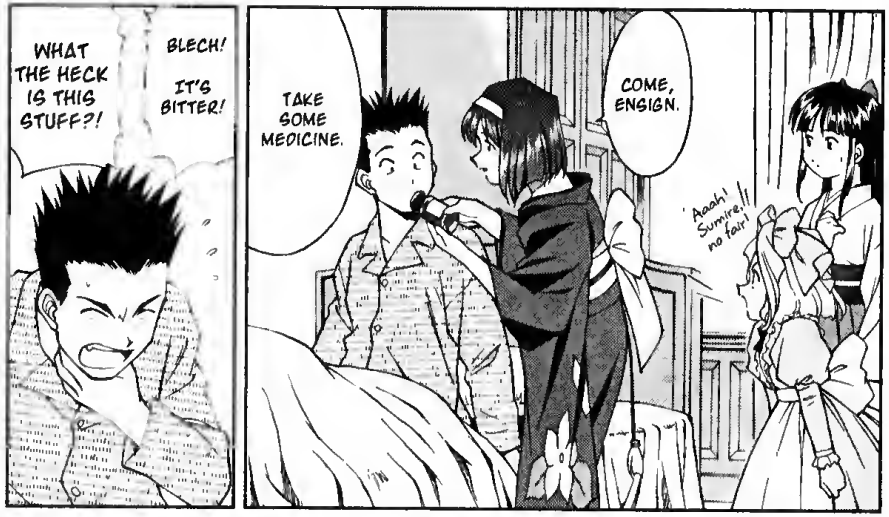
S--
STOP IT!
LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT!
HERE GOES!
HAVE MERCY ~~~~!!
EEEEEED!

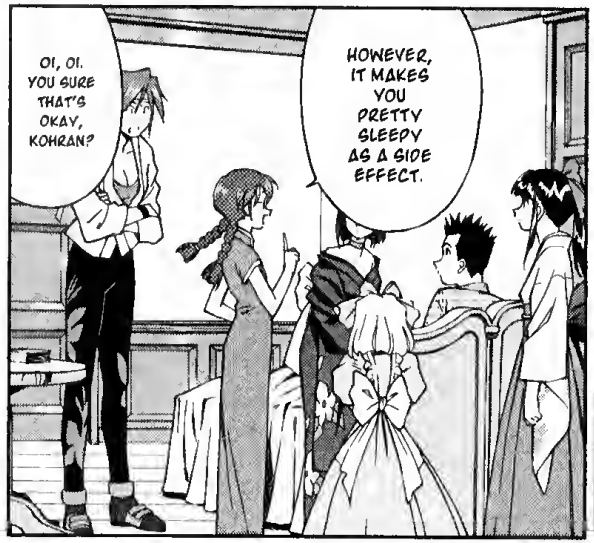
WHOA, WHOA! JUST HOLD ON A MINUTE!
HOW COME I HAVE TO GET RE-MODELED?!
FEAR NOT, OGAMI-HAN!
I HAVE YET TO FAIL WITH ONE OF MY EXPERIMENTS!
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
OOOOH!

OOOH! YES!
OH! ME, ME, ME~!
SO WHAT WOULD BE FUN TO TRY HERE...?


Nnngh... Unn...
...-SAN...
OGAMI-SAN!

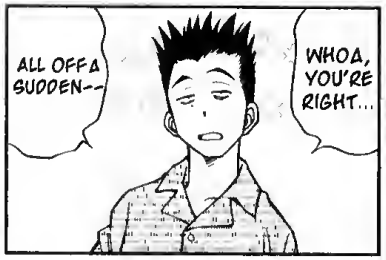
...MY ROOM?
BACK IN...
OGAMI-SAN, HOW ARE YOU FEELING?!
JUST A DREAM, EH...?
sigh...
ONII-CHAN, ARE YOU AWAKE?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KID?
HE WASN'T...?
OH! THAT BOY...
OGAMI-HAN, THAT SEEMED LIKE SOME NIGHTMARE!
WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?
.....
THEY SAID HE WAS SAFELY TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.
DON'T WORRY.

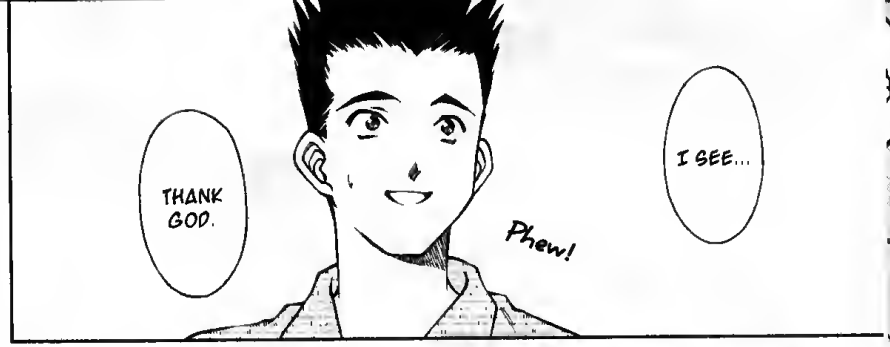

WHAT THE HECK IS THIS STUFF?!
BLECH! IT'S BITTER!
TAKE SOME MEDICINE.
COME, ENSIGN.
Aaah! Sumire!! no fair!

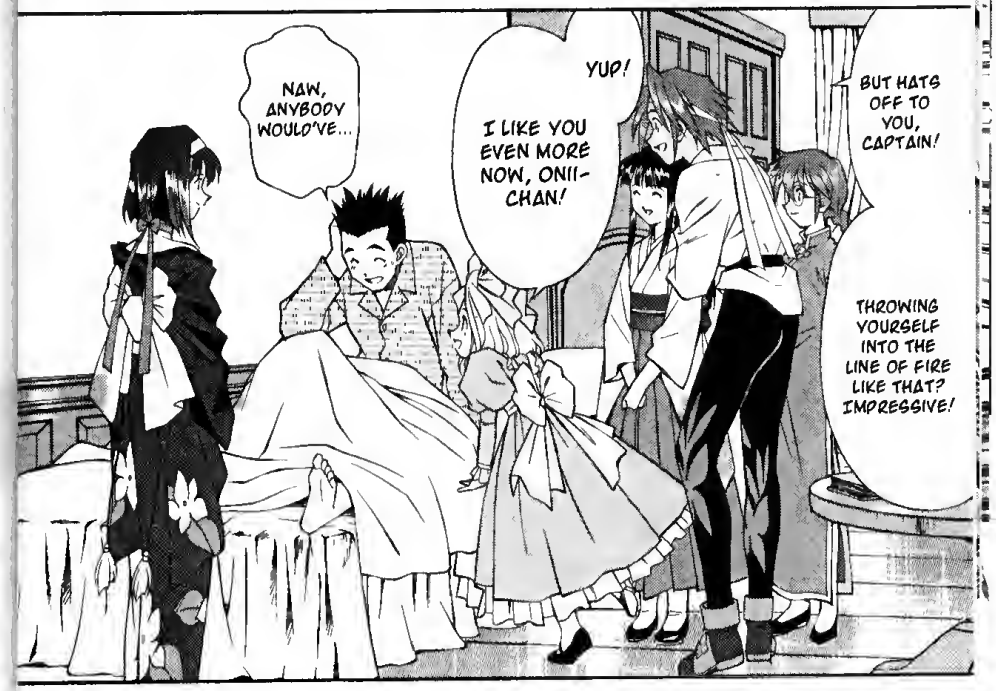

OI, OI. YOU SURE THAT'S OKAY, KOHRAN?
HOWEVER, IT MAKES YOU PRETTY SLEEPY AS A SIDE EFFECT.

IT'S A WONDER DRUG I DEVELOPED FOR INJURIES!
WORKS LIKE A CHARM.
IT'LL FIX YOU UP IN NO TIME!

ばたん


ALL OFF A SUDDEN--
WHOA, YOU'RE RIGHT...

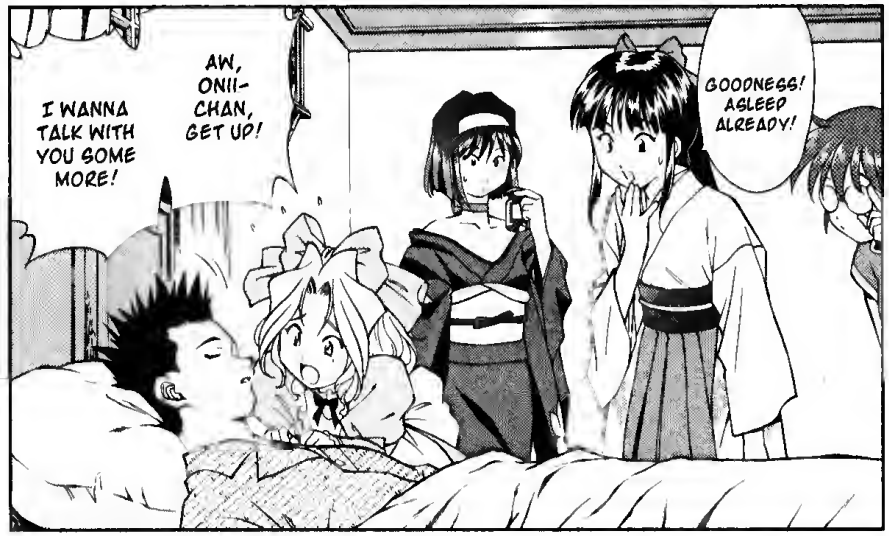

THANK GOD.
Phew!
I SEE...


NAW, ANYBODY WOULD'VE...
YUP! I LIKE YOU EVEN MORE NOW, ONII-CHAN!
BUT HATS OFF TO YOU, CAPTAIN!
THROWING YOURSELF INTO THE LINE OF FIRE LIKE THAT? IMPRESSIVE!

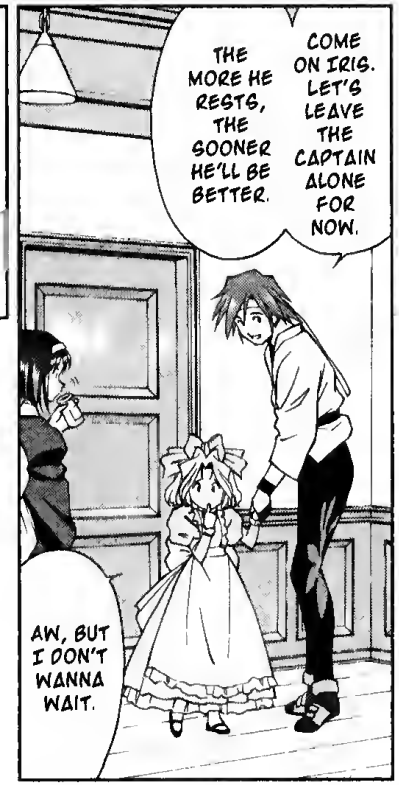
YOUR INJURIES WERE SEVERE ENOUGH TO TAKE YOU OUT FOR THREE DAYS!
SMALL WONDER.

ARE YOU IN PAIN, OGAMI-SAN!?

ドキン
ERK!


I WANNA TALK WITH YOU SOME MORE!
AW, ONII-CHAN, GET UP!
GOODNESS! ASLEEP ALREADY!

GET WELL SOON.
GOOD NIGHT, OGAMI-SAN.


COME ON IRIS. LET'S LEAVE THE CAPTAIN ALONE FOR NOW.
THE MORE HE RESTS, THE SOONER HE'LL BE BETTER.
AW, BUT I DON'T WANNA WAIT.

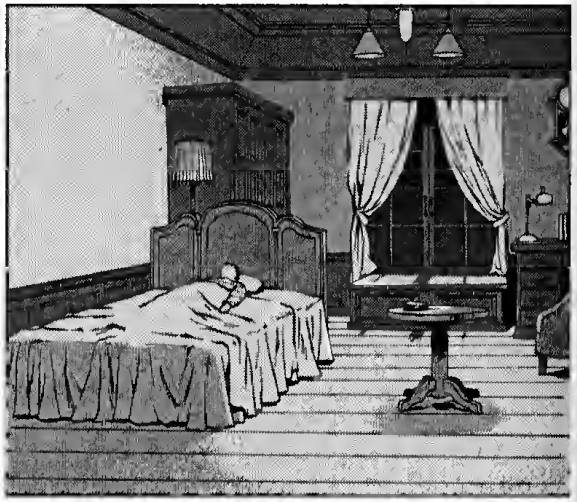
ZZZ...

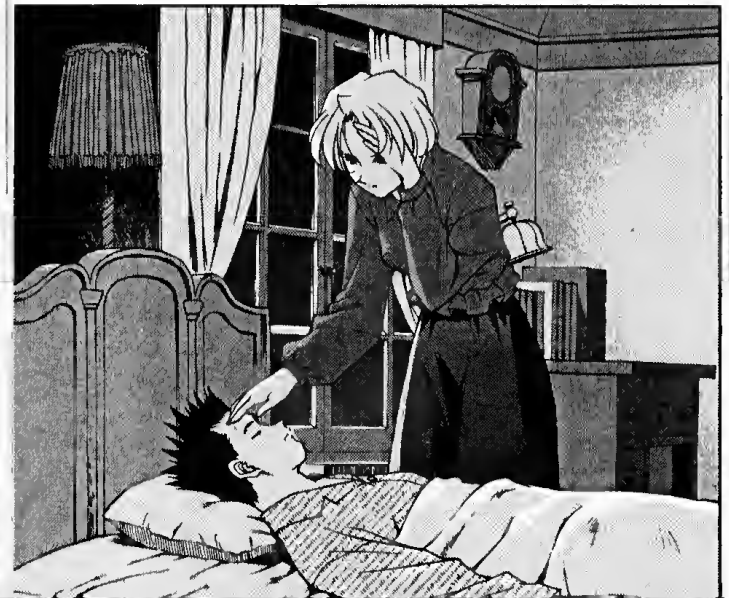
H-H-

NNN..

Captaaaain!!

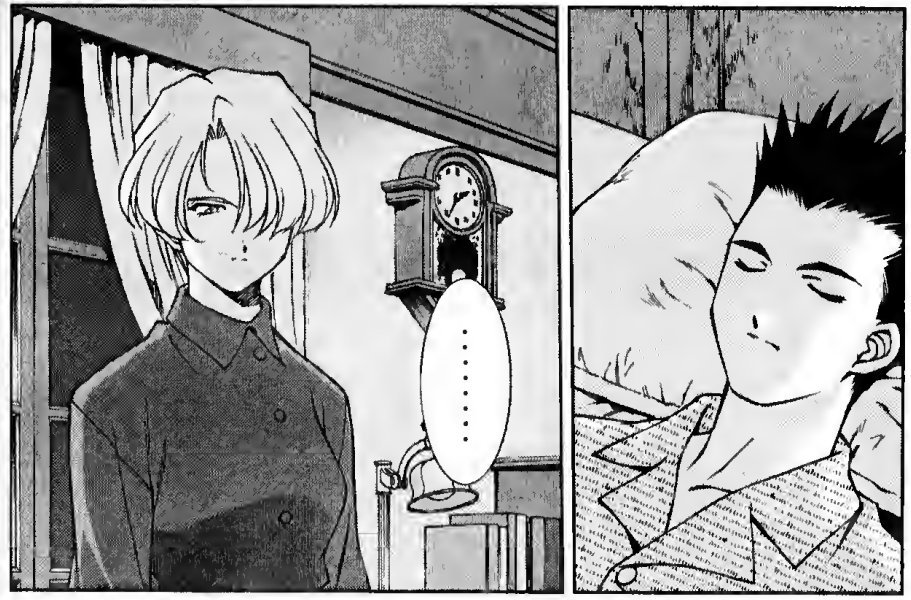
Uraaaaah!
CAPTAIN!

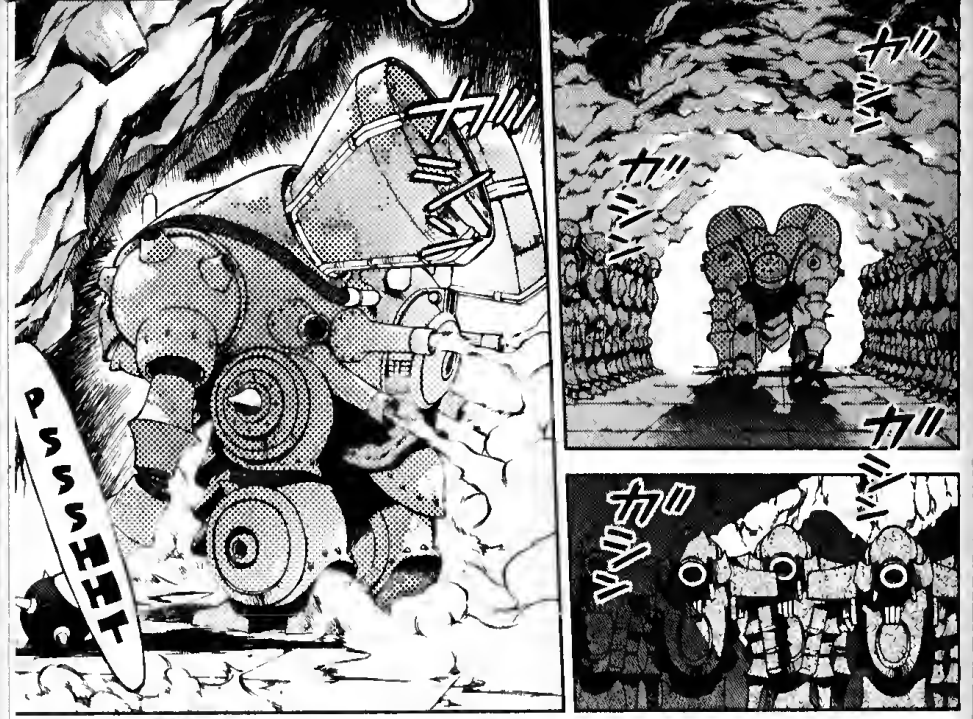




Hh?

HAA
HAA
HAA
HA?
THAT...
...SAME DREAM AGAIN...

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PSSSHH

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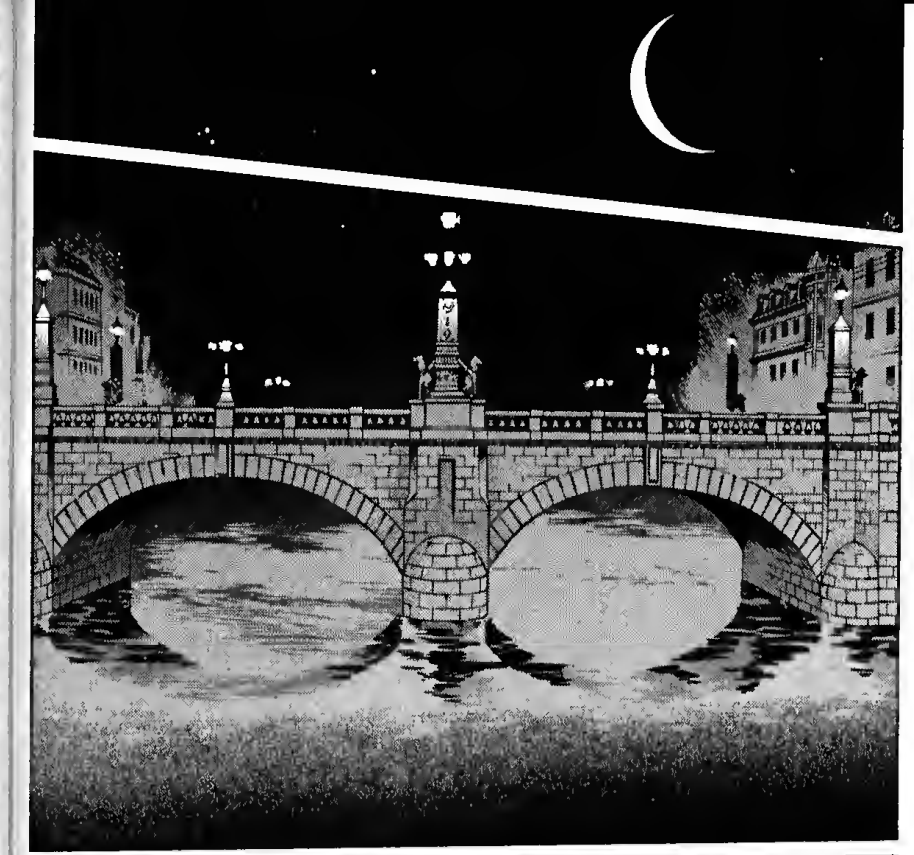
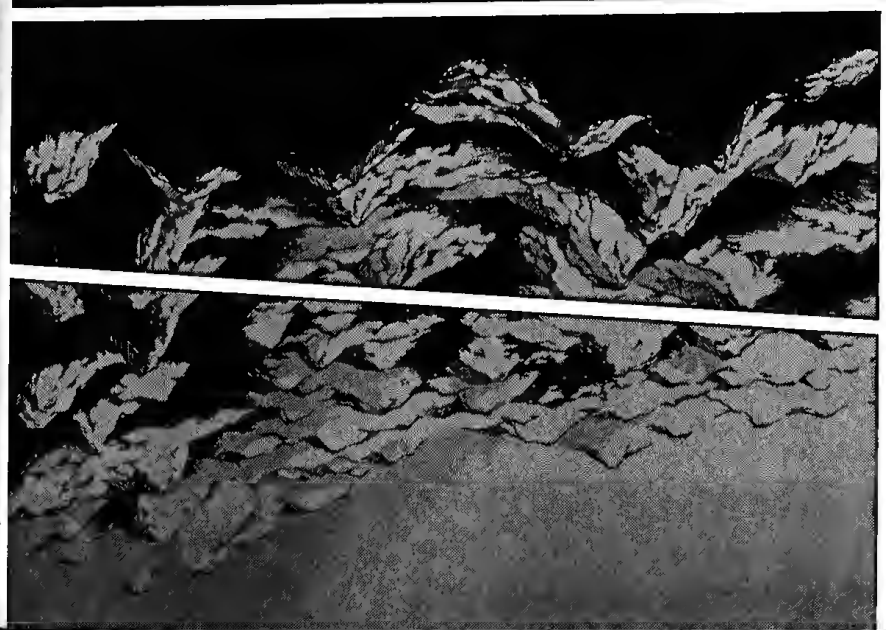
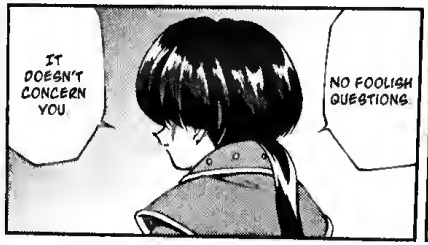




HAH! REVOLTING.
WITH YOU ...?
I REFUSE.
BROTHER!
IMPERIAL FIGHTING TROUPE WOULD BE NOTHING AGAINST OUR COMBINED BROTHERLY POWER!
AND SURELY THAT WOULD PLEASE LORD TENKAI.
HEY...
HOW ABOUT WE TEAM UP?

UNDER-STAND, RAGETSU?!
NOW, DON'T INTERFERE, OR I'LL GET ANGRY.
I CAN HANDLE THOSE IDIOTS MYSELF.
MY PLAN IS ALREADY IN MOTION.
UM...
AWW...

YOU WENT UP AGAINST THE IMPERIAL FIGHTING TROUPE, DIDN'T YOU?
HOW'D IT GO?
HM. RAGETSU.


IT DOESN'T CONCERN YOU.
NO FOOLISH QUESTIONS

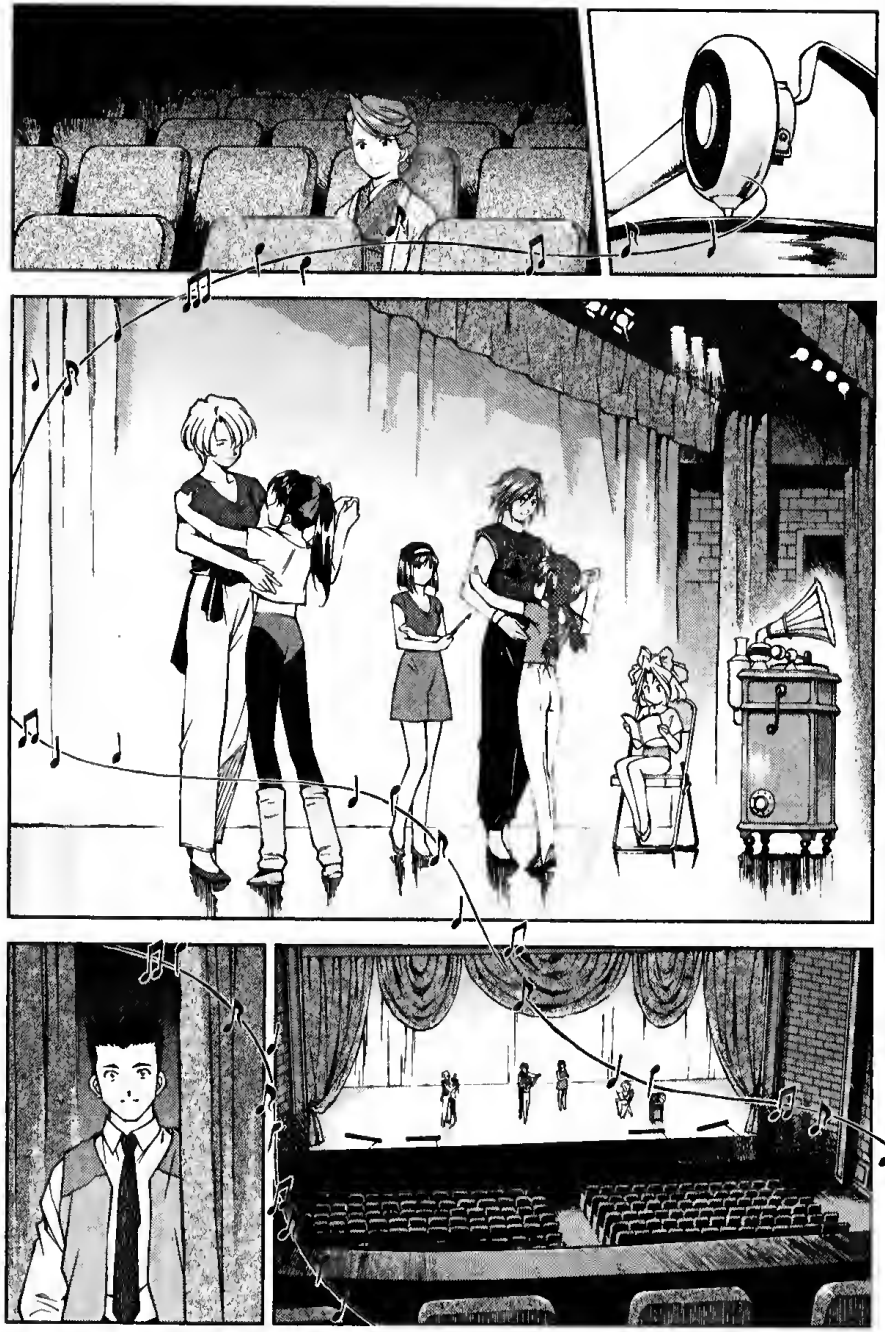
OH.
YOU'RE BACK, BROTHER?

IT'S NOT ONLY YOUR AFFAIR, BROTHER!
IT'S THE MISSION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE KURONOGU COUNCIL TO DEFEAT THE IMPERIAL FIGHTING TROUPE, AND ALL WHO STAND IN THE WAY OF LORD TENKAI'S MASTER PLAN.
YOU NEEDN'T BE THAT WAY.

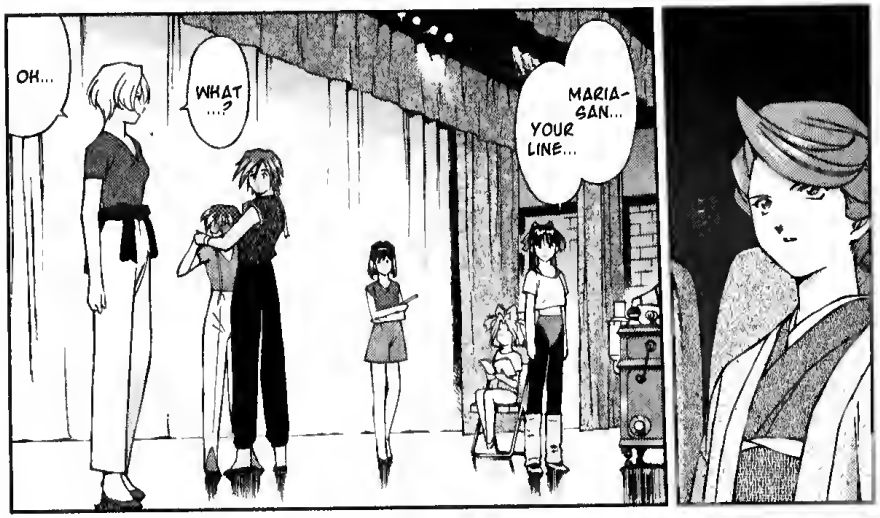
OGAMI-SAN!
IS IT ALL RIGHT FOR YOU TO BE UP AND ABOUT?
SURE I'M PRETTY MUCH HEALED
SEE?
付受
THAT'S GREAT.
NOW I CAN ASK YOU TO DO CHORES AGAIN!
HA HA...
HEY! YURI!
WHO'S PLAYING THE LEAD?
IT'S "CINDERELLA," ISN'T IT?
A NEW PLAY?
YOU SHOULD GO WATCH.
THE FLOWER TROUPE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF REHEARSING THE NEW PLAY.
OH, YES.
WHAT...?
SO IS SUMIRE-KUN IN A FOUL MOOD AGAIN?
LAST MONTH'S "BECAUSE OF LOVE" WAS SUCH A HIT THAT SHE'S PLAYING THE LEAD AGAIN.
SAKURA-SAN IS.

ガチャ
AH!
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU TWO IN A WHILE.
IT'S SO GLOOMY.
I HATE MONSOON SEASON
YURI, IT JUST STARTED RAINING TODAY! YOU'RE SO IMPATIENT.
HEH HEH HEH.
AWWW!
WHY CAN'T IT JUST END AND BE SUMMER ALREADY?!
付受

Reception



SEE YOU LATER.
W-WELL, I GUESS I'LL HAVE A LOOK.
GULP
...SHE BULLIES CINDERELLA WITH SUCH JOY...
YOU'D THINK SO, BUT SHE'S NOT.
SUMIRE-SAN PLAYS THE EVIL STEPMOTHER, AND...
Reception
I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER NOW.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN.
HEY, OGAMI'S BACK!
YOU ALL BETTER?
OH, MANAGER.
HOPE YOU GET BACK TO WORK AS SOON AS YOU CAN.
I HAD A ROUGH TIME WHILE YOU WERE DOWN, SINCE THERE WAS NO ONE TO DO THE CHORES.
Y-YES, SIR...
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
SWELL!


OH...
WHAT ...?
MARIA-SAN... YOUR LINE...

YEAH.
THE REST OF US CAN GO OVER THE FIRST SCENE, SO GET SOME REST, MARIA-HAN!
YOU LOOK AWFUL PALE.
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF, MARIA.

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL DO THAT.
THANKS

I'M SORRY.
I'M NOT FEELING VERY WELL...

DING
DONG
DING

THE PRINCE WOULD HAVE TO BE MARIA.
IT'S THE BALL SCENE.

I MUST LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
FORGIVE ME, DEAR PRINCE

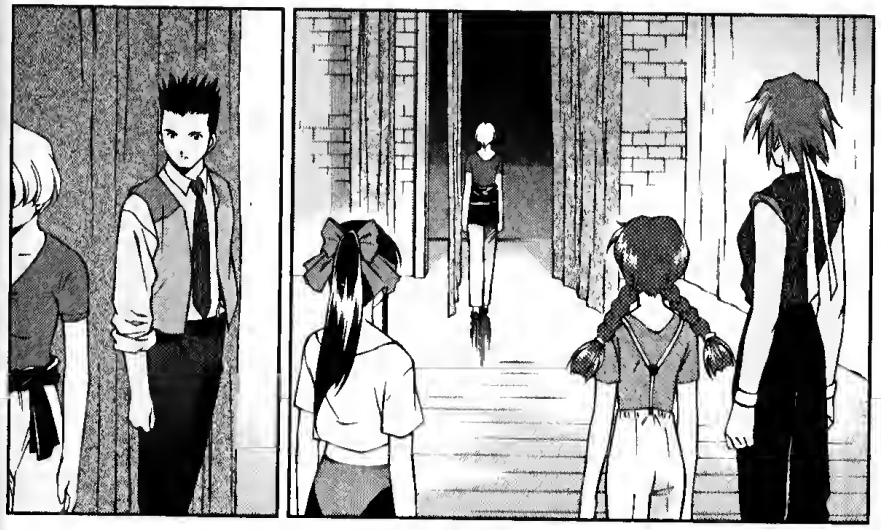
OH, HOW I WISH TIME WOULD STOP.
IT'S TOLLING MIDNIGHT!

THE BELL...!
OH...!

.....

ナニナニナニ

.....



SHE HASN'T BEEN HERSELF SINCE THE LAST BATTLE.
THERE'S SOMETHING BOTHERING HER.
I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER.
MARIA-SAN...
OR SOME-THING LIKE THAT...
WATCH IT, SUMIRE-SAN.
PERHAPS SHE TIRED OF YOUR PATHETIC ATTEMPTS AT ACTING.

...WILL YOU THROW AWAY YOUR CODE NAME, "KAZUAR," AND...
WHEN THIS BATTLE IS OVER...

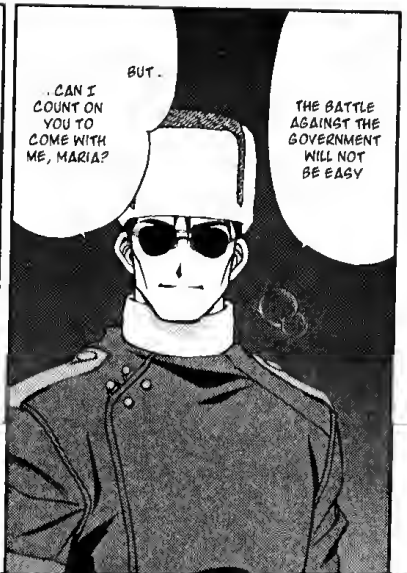
...MY WIFE?
...BECOME...

OH CAPTAIN...

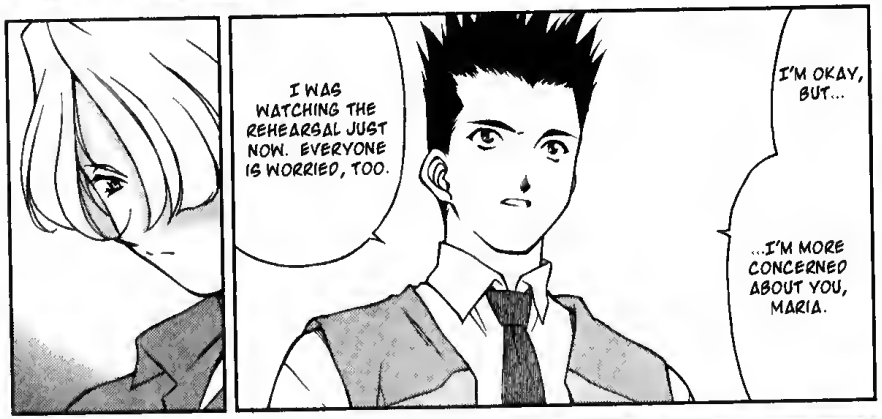
THIS COUNTRY IS ABOUT TO CHANGE...
WE, THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY, WITH OUR VERY HANDS
NO, WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE IT.

AND... I HAVE ONE MORE FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU.
YES?

CAPTAIN YURI!
OF COURSE


BUT...
...CAN I COUNT ON YOU TO COME WITH ME, MARIA?
THE BATTLE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE EASY

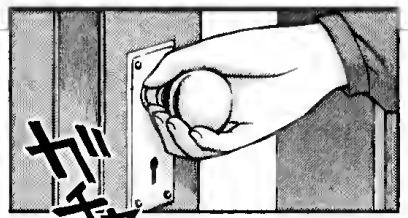
HUH?
OH, SURE...
YOU'RE FEELING BETTER NOW?
ENSIGN ...
HI, MARIA.


I WAS WATCHING THE REHEARSAL JUST NOW. EVERYONE IS WORRIED, TOO.
I'M OKAY, BUT...
...I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT YOU, MARIA.

YOU MIGHT FEEL BETTER IF YOU TALK ABOUT IT.
IF SOMETHING IS BOTHERING YOU, I'D HOPE YOU'D TRUST ME TO HELP YOU.
MARIA...
I GUESS I'M JUST A LITTLE TIRED.
IT'S REALLY NOTHING.

CAPTAIN ...

KNOCK
KNOCK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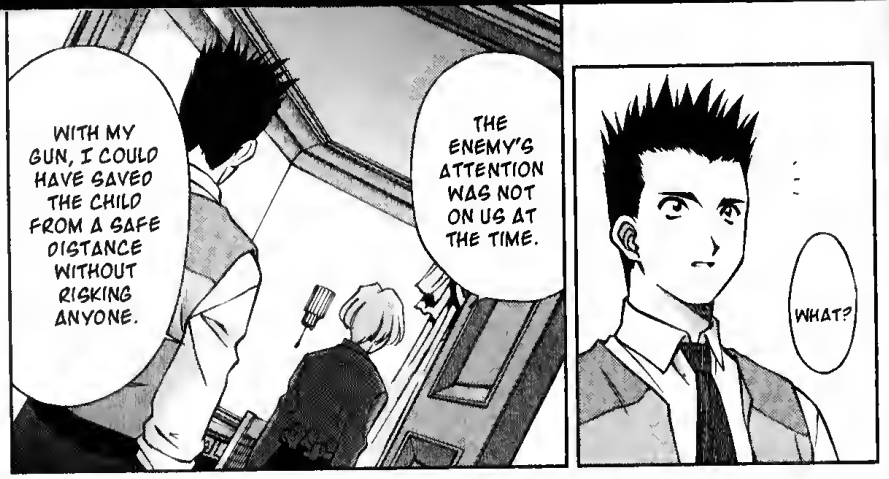
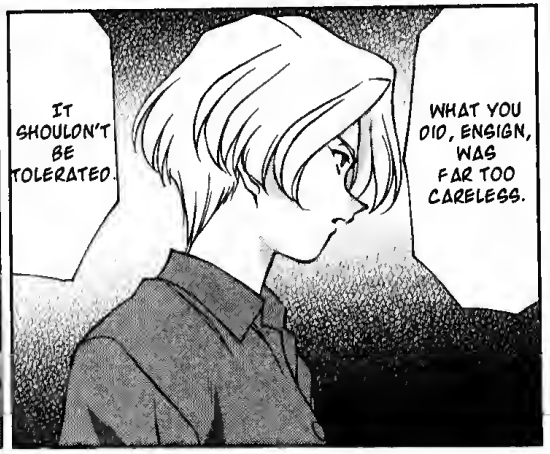
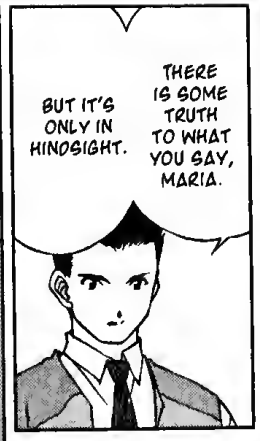

WITH MY GUN, I COULD HAVE SAVED THE CHILD FROM A SAFE DISTANCE WITHOUT RISKING ANYONE.
THE ENEMY'S ATTENTION WAS NOT ON US AT THE TIME.

WHAT?

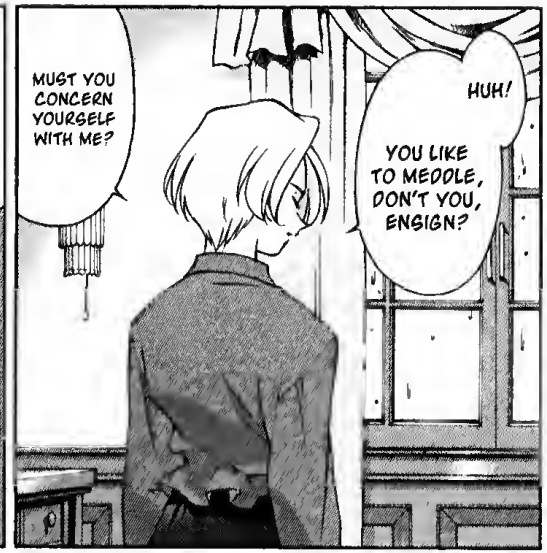
MARIA ...


IT SHOULDN'T BE TOLERATED.
WHAT YOU DID, ENSIGN, WAS FAR TOO CARELESS.

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT!
THEREFORE, I RAN OUT TO PROTECT THAT CHILD.
OUR DUTY IS TO GUARD THE CITIZENS OF THE CAPITAL FROM HARM.

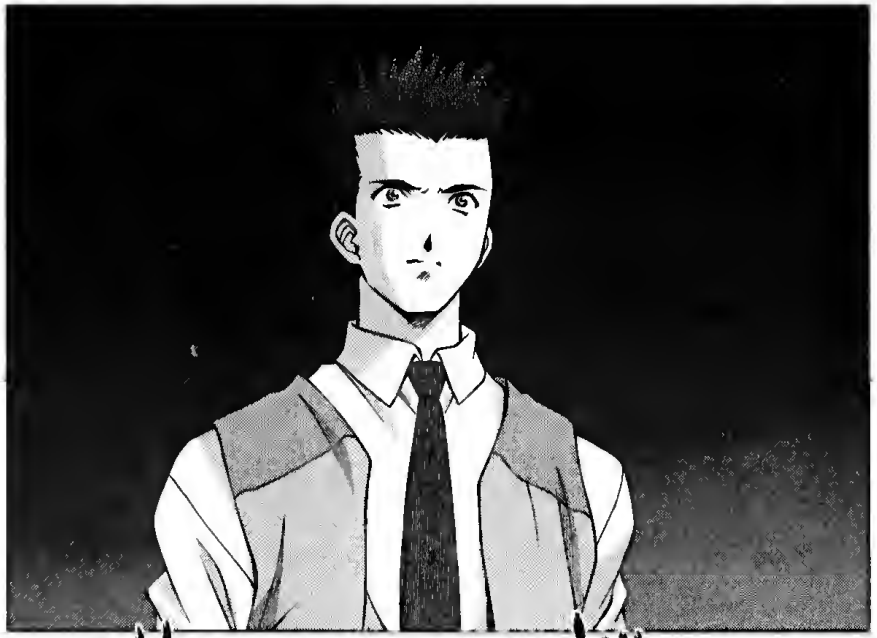

BUT IT'S ONLY IN HINDSIGHT.
THERE IS SOME TRUTH TO WHAT YOU SAY, MARIA.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? IT'S ONLY NATURAL.
A CAPTAIN SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE MEMBERS OF HIS TEAM.


MUST YOU CONCERN YOURSELF WITH ME?
HUH!
YOU LIKE TO MEDDLE, DON'T YOU, ENSIGN?

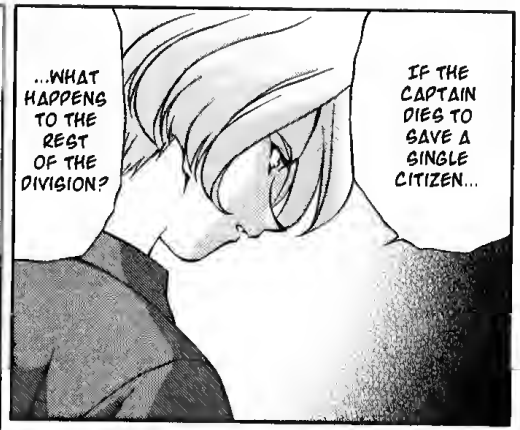
...JUMP OUT BACK THERE?
WHY DID YOU...

MARIA?



ミタ!…
ァァァァァァ

A SINGLE MISSTEP …
…CAN BRING ABOUT DISASTER


…WHAT HAPPENS TO THE REST OF THE DIVISION?
IF THE CAPTAIN DIES TO SAVE A SINGLE CITIZEN…

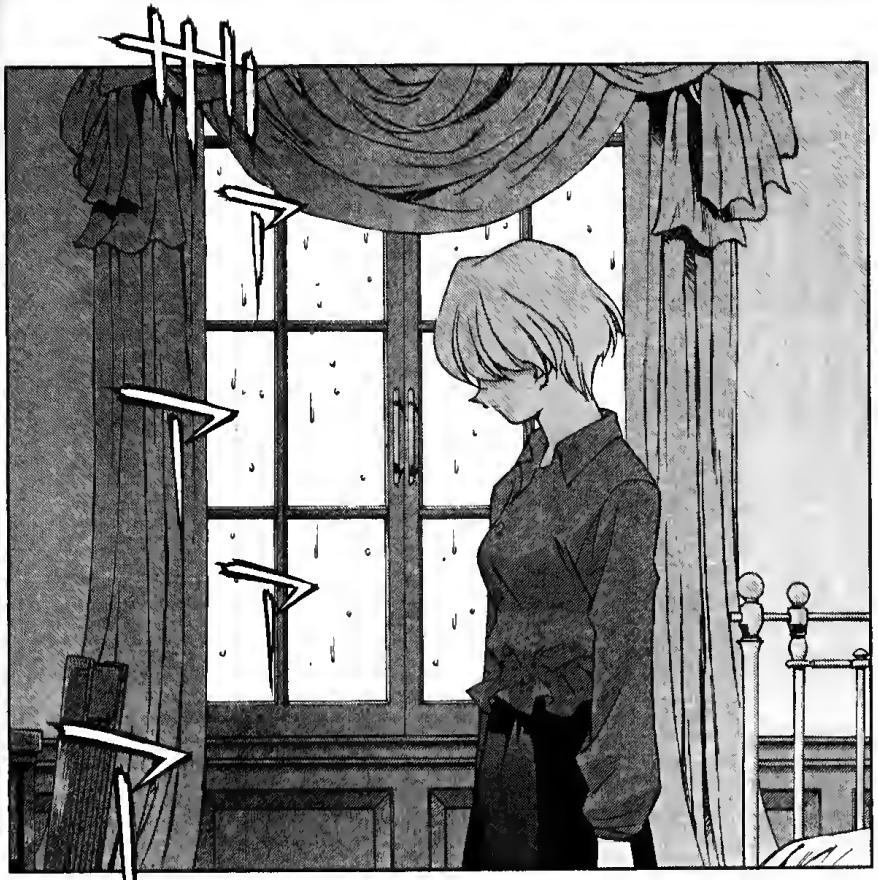
I…
WELL…

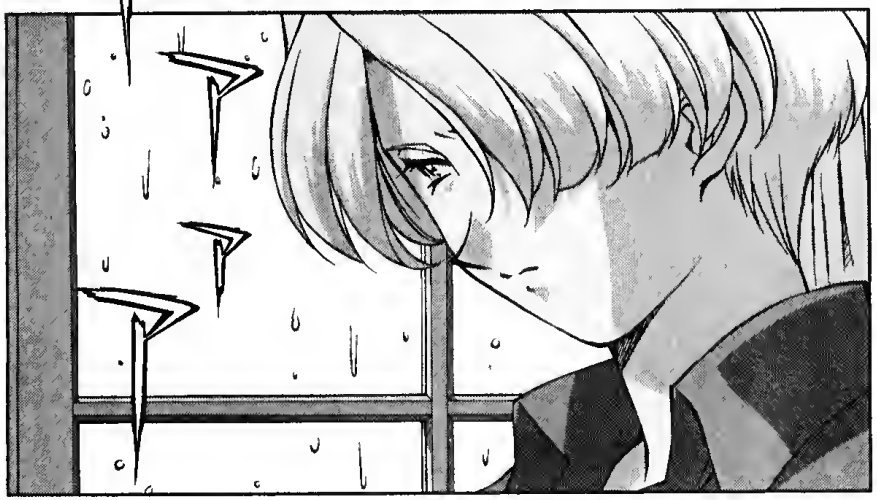
YOU'RE NOT FIT TO BE CAPTAIN!
ENSIGN OGAMI…

THEN I SHALL GRANT YOUR WISH!
YOU REALLY WISH TO GO TO THE BALL THAT BADLY, CINDERELLA?
REALLY? FAIRY GOD-MOTHER?!

THEY WON'T LET ME IN WEARING RAGS LIKE THIS...
I HAVE NOTHING TO WEAR.
BUT...

.....
MY GOOD-NESS! HOW BEAUTI-FUL!
POOF!
TA-DAH!
NOT TO WORRY!



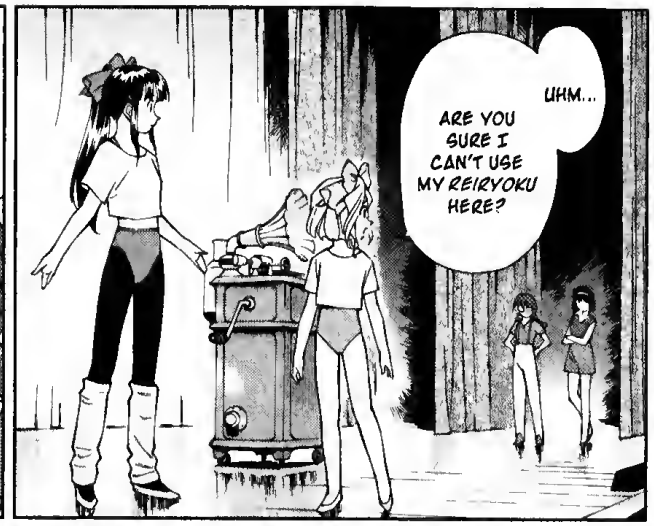


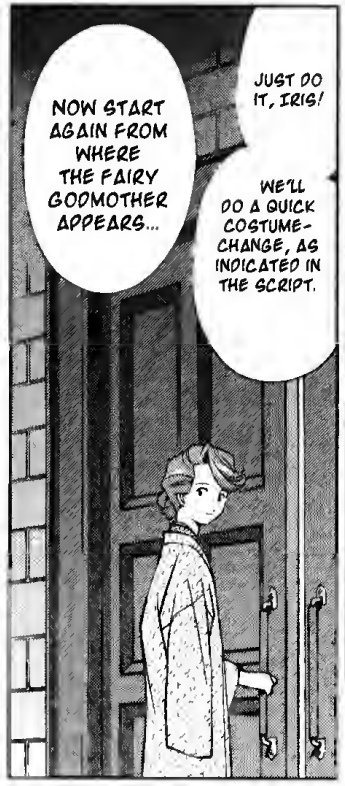
sigh...

WAAH!
I LOVE YOU, TSUBAKI!

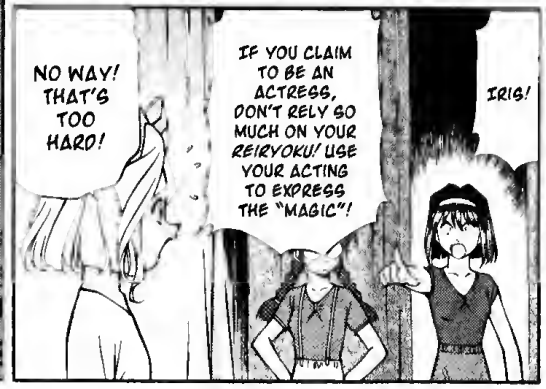
Cinderella
MONSIEUR ANDRE...
OH...

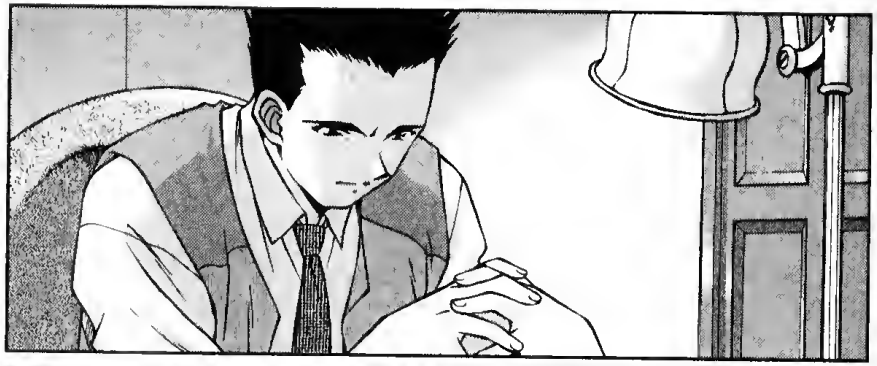
SINCE IT'S REAL AFTER ALL.
WELL...IT WOULD BE NICE TO, I KNOW...

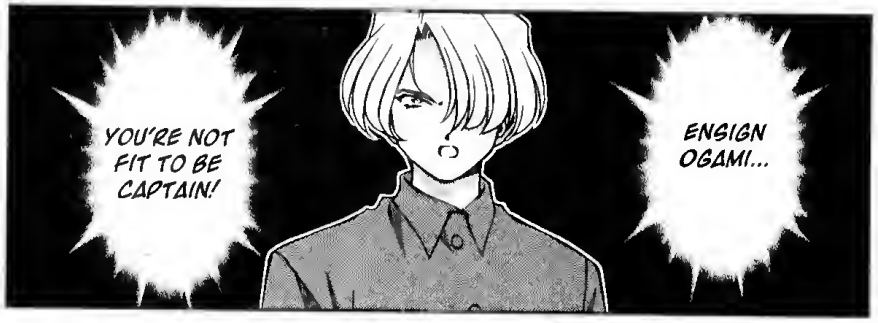

UHM... ARE YOU SURE I CAN'T USE MY REIRYOKU HERE?


NOW START AGAIN FROM WHERE THE FAIRY GODMOTHER APPEARS...
JUST DO IT, IRIS!
WE'LL DO A QUICK COSTUME-CHANGE, AS INDICATED IN THE SCRIPT.

WELL, YES, MAYBE, BUT...
DO THAT, AND WE MIGHT AS WELL BE ADVERTISING OUR SECRET!
DON'T BE STUPID, KOHRAN.


NO WAY! THAT'S TOO HARD!
IF YOU CLAIM TO BE AN ACTRESS, DON'T RELY SO MUCH ON YOUR REIRYOKU! USE YOUR ACTING TO EXPRESS THE "MAGIC"!
IRIS!

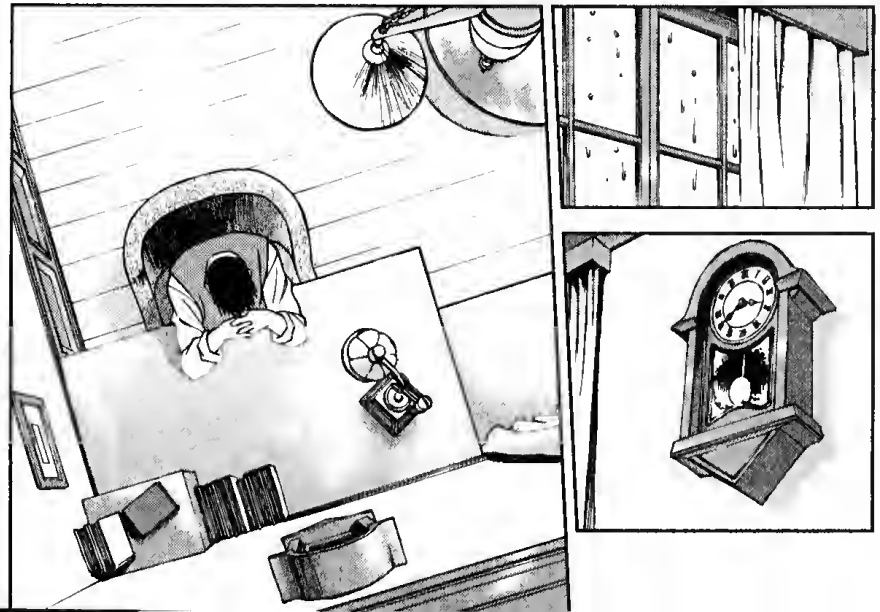


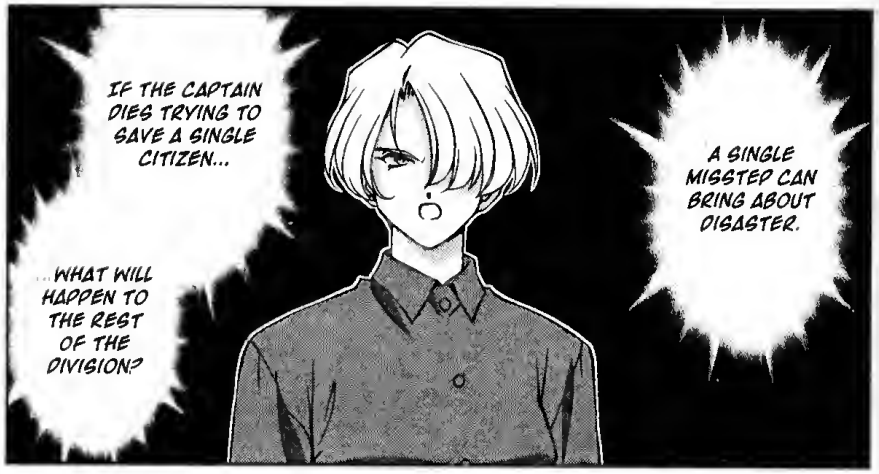

YOU'RE NOT FIT TO BE CAPTAIN!
ENSIGN OGAMI...

.....

WAS THAT SO WRONG...?
WHAT I DID...

Cinderella
AW, I WAS TRYING TO IMITATE MARIA.
GOODNESS! AYAME-SAN!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN?!
WAS I ANY GOOD?

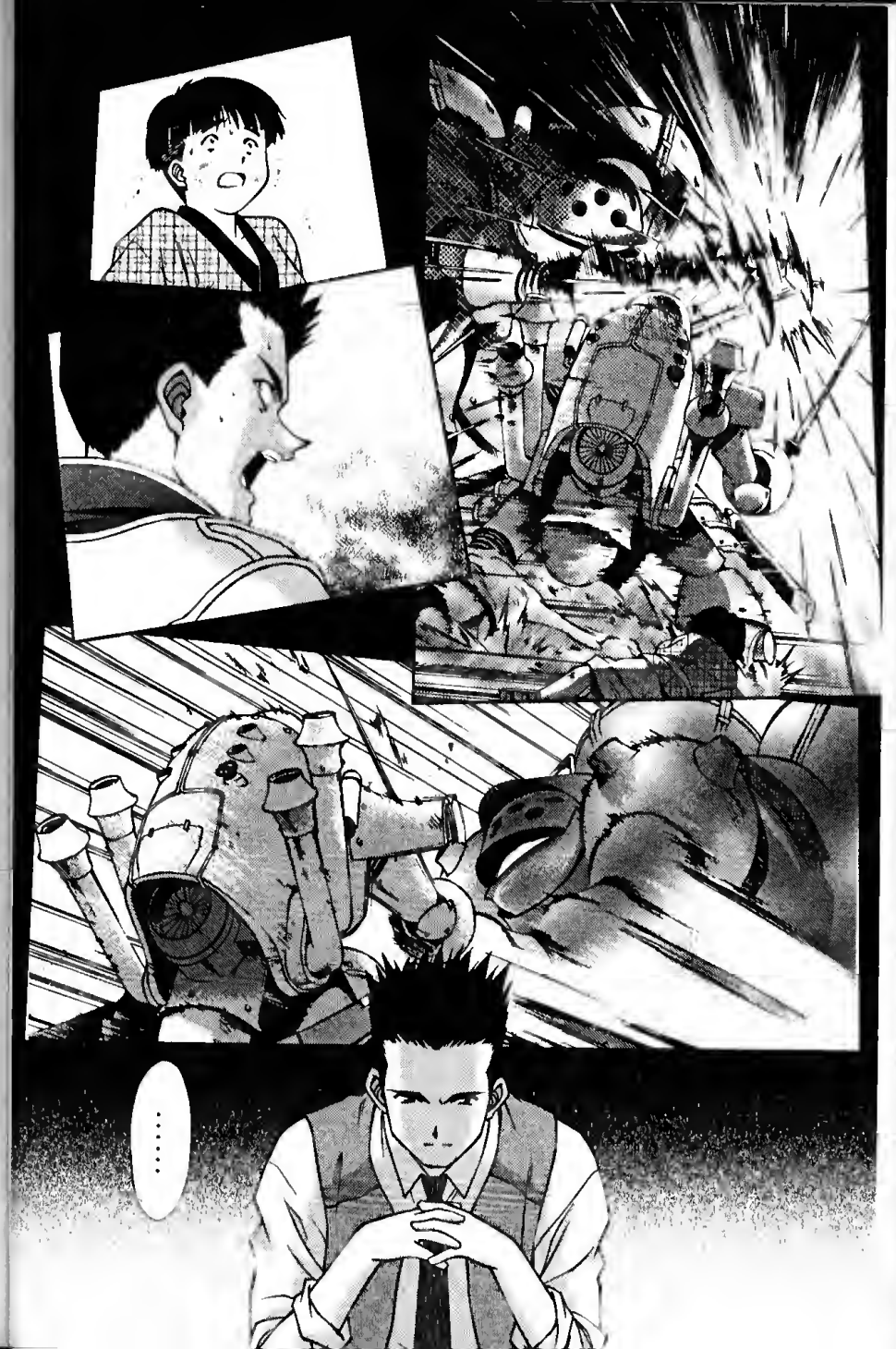



IF THE CAPTAIN DIES TRYING TO SAVE A SINGLE CITIZEN...
A SINGLE MISSTEP CAN BRING ABOUT DISASTER.
...WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE REST OF THE DIVISION?

I'M SURE
I'D HAVE REGRETTED IT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE

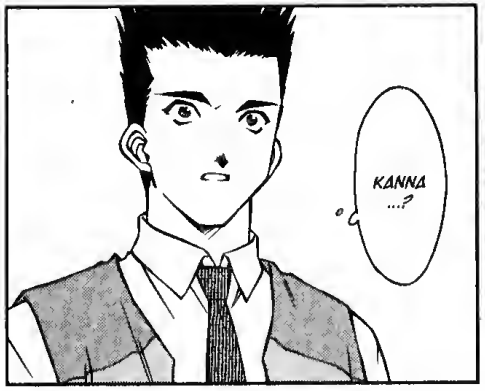
PERHAPS MARIA WAS RIGHT.
MY ACTIONS WERE FAR TOO RASH.

BUT...
IF I HADN'T GONE OUT FOR THE CHILD... IF I'D LET HIM DIE...


.....

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE CAPTAIN FOR THIS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, MARIA?!

I'M SURE SHE'LL UNDERSTAND WHERE I'M COMING FROM.
ANYWAY, I'LL TRY TO REASON WITH HER ONE MORE TIME.


KANNA ...?

IT'S NONE OF YOUR CONCERN.
ENOUGH. WILL YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?

IN THAT SITUATION, ANYONE WITH A HEART WOULD HAVE TRIED TO SAVE THE CHILD!!
HOW COULD YOU GO AND BE SO CRUEL TO HIM?

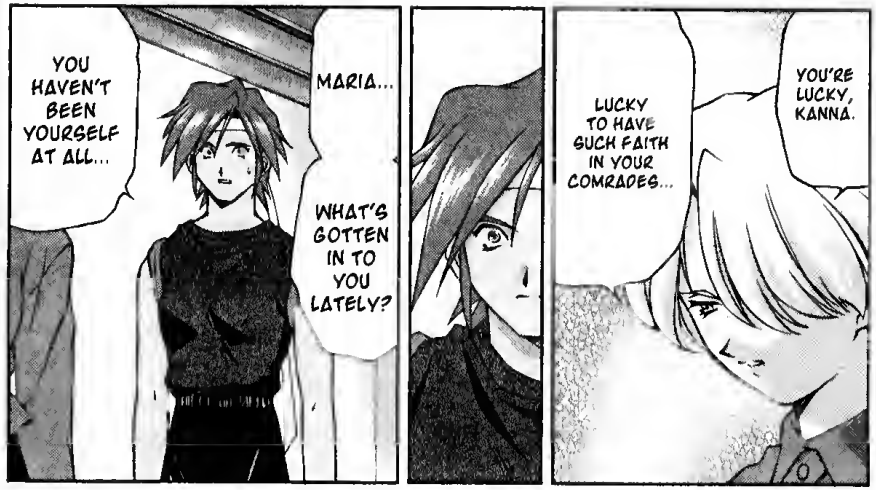
WHAT ...?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

AREN'T WE COMRADES IN ARMS?
WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOREVER, YET YOU DARE SPEAK TO ME THAT WAY?

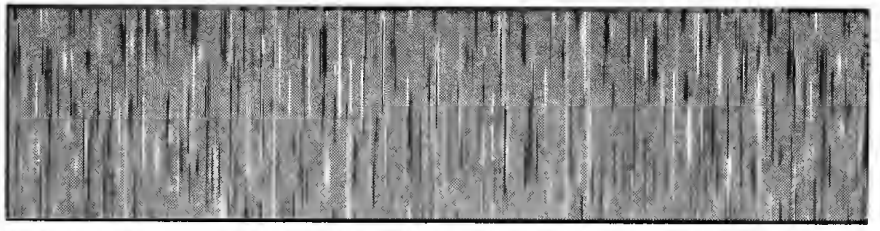
NO PRIDE, NO HOPE, NO FRIENDS TO BELIEVE IN. JUST LIVING...
...THE LOWEST EXISTENCE POSSIBLE.
BEFORE I JOINED THE TEGEKI...
..I HAD SUNK TO BEING A BODYGUARD FOR THE MAFIA IN NEW YORK.

I THOUGHT I HAD FOUND MY LOST SOUL.
BUT...
I CAME HERE AT AYAME-SAN'S REQUEST...
...AND MET ALL OF YOU.

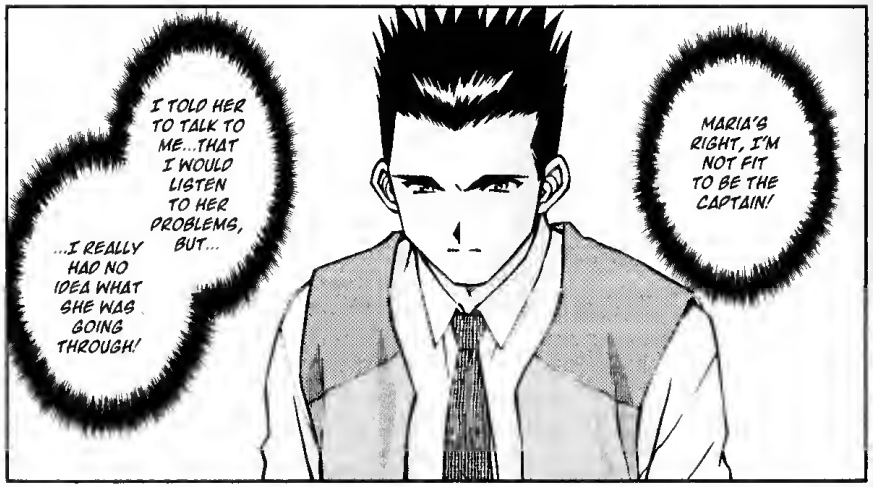
CAN'T YOU JUST BE THE MARIA I KNOW?
COME ON.
IT'S THE PRESENT MARIA WHO IS MY FRIEND.
JUST FORGET ABOUT THE PAST.
.....
BUT...
I'M...


YOU HAVEN'T BEEN YOURSELF AT ALL...
MARIA...
WHAT'S GOTTEN IN TO YOU LATELY?
LUCKY TO HAVE SUCH FAITH IN YOUR COMRADES...
YOU'RE LUCKY, KANNA.

I'VE BEEN REMEMBERING THE PAST.



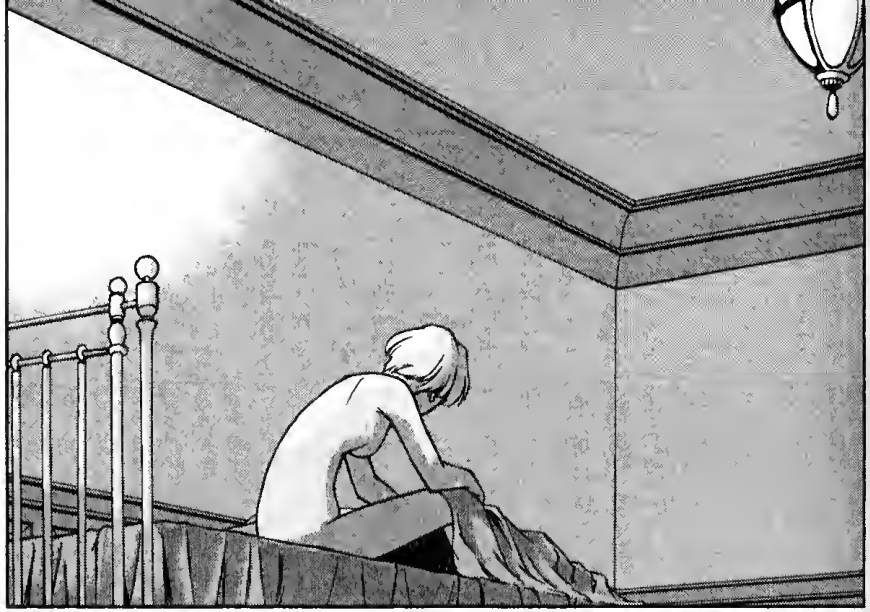
A PERSON ...
...CAN'T CAST OFF THEIR PAST.
IT TRAILS ALONG AFTER YOU...
...FOREVER AND EVER.
MARIA ...


MARIA'S RIGHT, I'M NOT FIT TO BE THE CAPTAIN!
I TOLD HER TO TALK TO ME...THAT I WOULD LISTEN TO HER PROBLEMS, BUT...
...I REALLY HAD NO IDEA WHAT SHE WAS GOING THROUGH!

MARIA ...
WHAT AM I TO DO?
WHAT CAN I DO...
...TO HELP YOU?

YOU'RE ALIVE...
YOU'RE ALIVE...
CAPTAIN ...!
Captain!

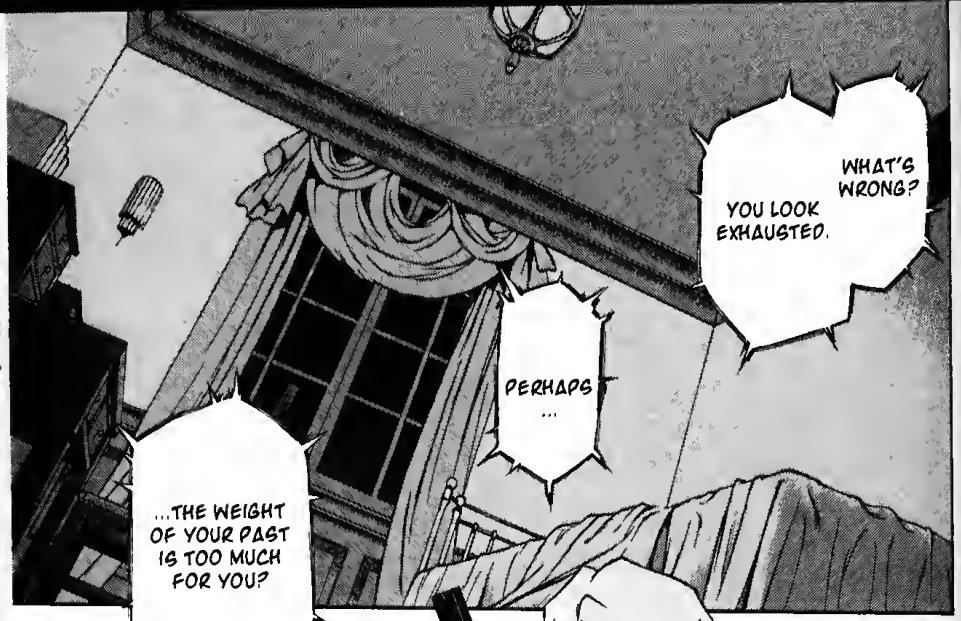
WHERE IS...
MARIA!
COME ON, MARIA.



HAAA
HAAA
HAAA
HAAA

HA HA HA HA
AH
HA
HA
HA!

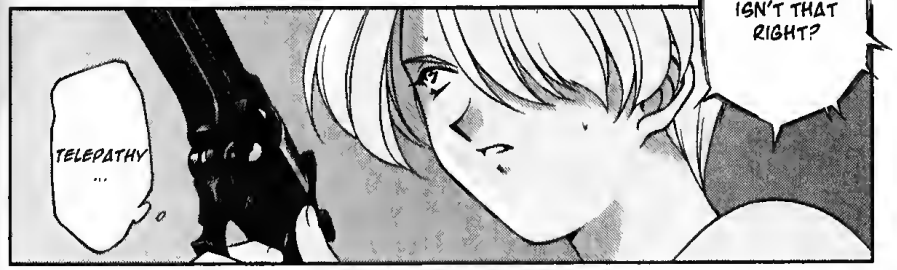
BOO!
KYAAAAA!

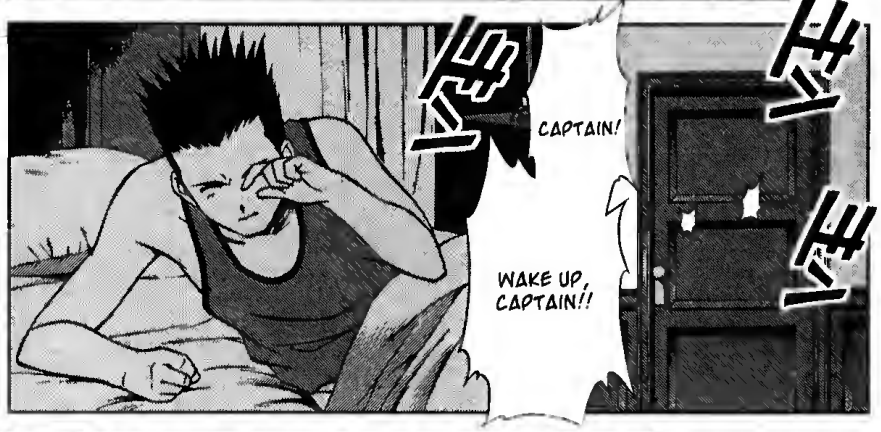

WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED.
PERHAPS ...
...THE WEIGHT OF YOUR PAST IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU?
HUH HUH HUH HUH!

THIS IS ALL YOUR DOING!
SO THAT'S IT...

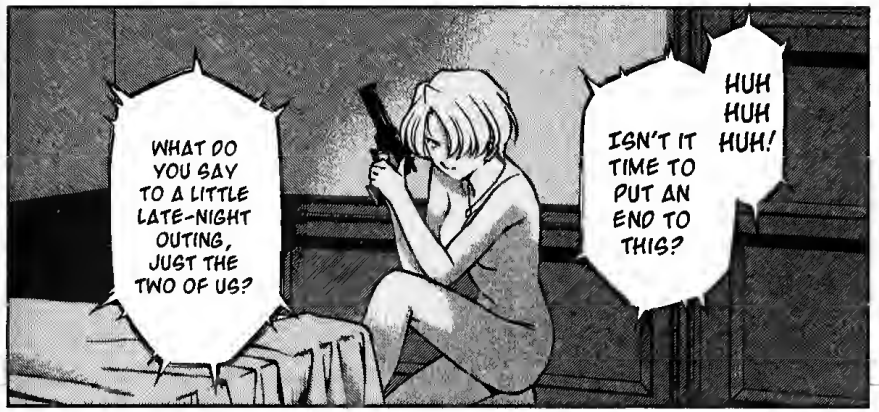
THAT WAS FUN.
WASN'T THAT A MASTERPIECE, MARIA?

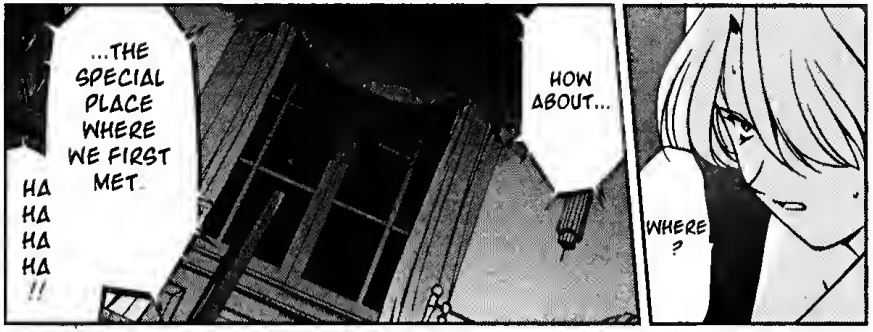
I MEAN..
FORMER COMRADE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION...


CODE NAME, KAZUAR... ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
TELEPATHY ...


CAPTAIN!
WAKE UP, CAPTAIN!!

WHAT'S GOING ON? IT'S LATE...
KANNA ...

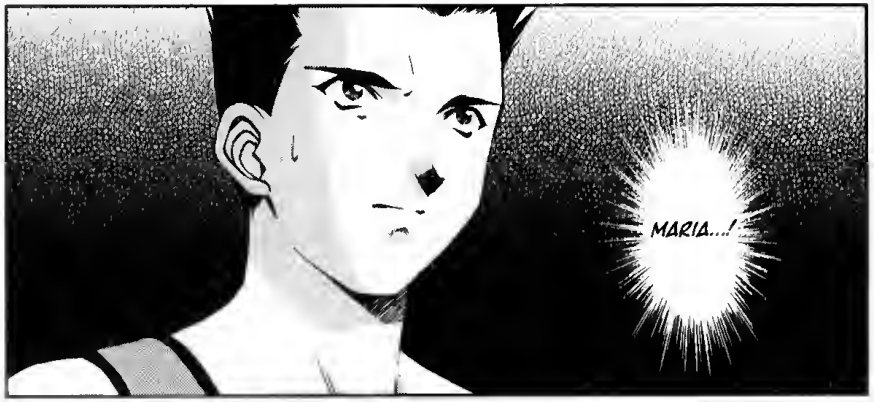

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A LITTLE LATE-NIGHT OUTING, JUST THE TWO OF US?
ISN'T IT TIME TO PUT AN END TO THIS?
HUH HUH HUH!

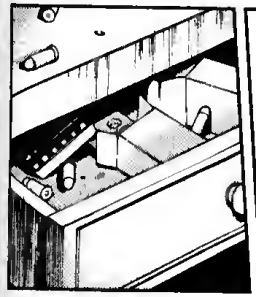

HA HA HA HA !!
...THE SPECIAL PLACE WHERE WE FIRST MET.
HOW ABOUT...
WHERE ?

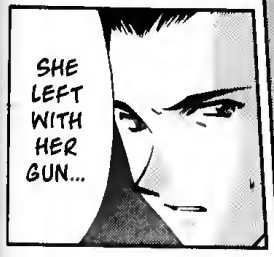
MY DEAR KAZUAR!
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU.

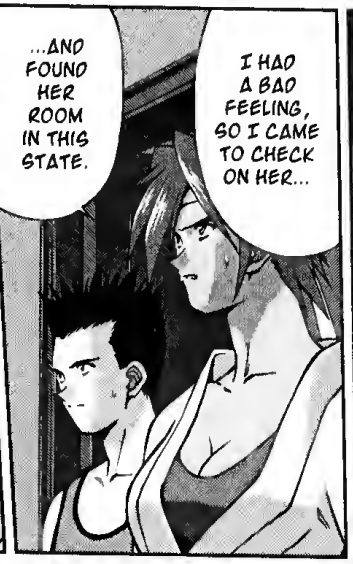
IT'S MARIA...
MARIA'S DISAPPEARED!!

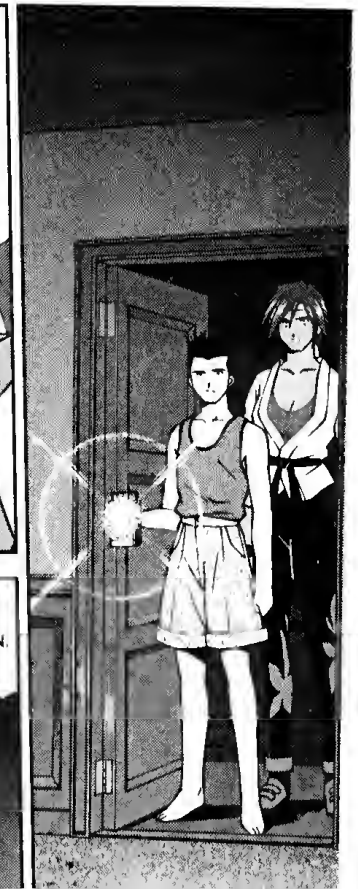
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

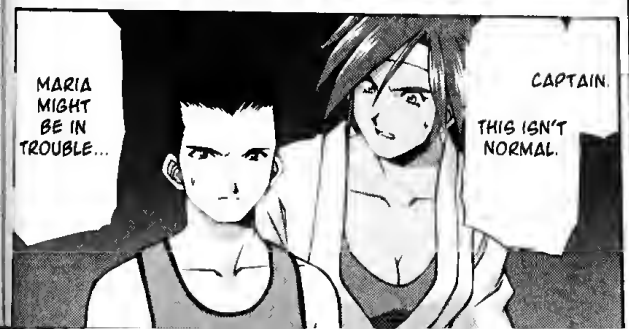

MARIA...!




SHE LEFT WITH HER GUN...


...AND FOUND HER ROOM IN THIS STATE.
I HAD A BAD FEELING, SO I CAME TO CHECK ON HER...




MARIA MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE...
CAPTAIN.
THIS ISN'T NORMAL.

KU KU KU KU !
コツ…
コツ…
コツ…

NOW...
SHALL WE START OUR LITTLE "DATE"?
WELCOME, KAZUAR.
I'M SO HAPPY YOU CAME.

SETSUNA...
YOUR LIFE...
...AREN'T NEARLY ENOUGH TO STOP ME.
TOO BAD FOR YOU, BUT BULLETS...

Ha ha ha ha !!
...WILL BE...
...
MINE!!

IN YOUR CURRENT MENTAL STATE...
YOU STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND?
HA!
HAAH

...TO DEFEAT ME!
...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU...

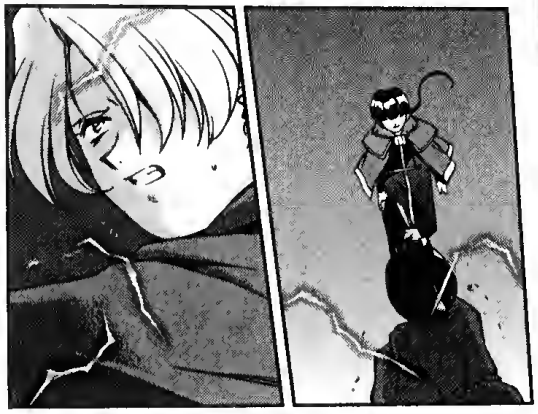
WE'RE VERY MUCH ALIKE, YOU AND I.
YOU SEE...
KU KU KU KU!

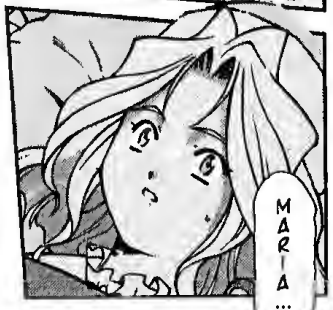
UNDER YOUR MASK AS AN ALLY OF JUSTICE LIES A MURDERER!
THIS IS YOUR TRUE SELF, KAZUAR!
A COLD-BLOODED MURDERER!!

TCH!
SHUT UP!!

GAH HA HA HA!
HUH HUH HUH HUH!

!!



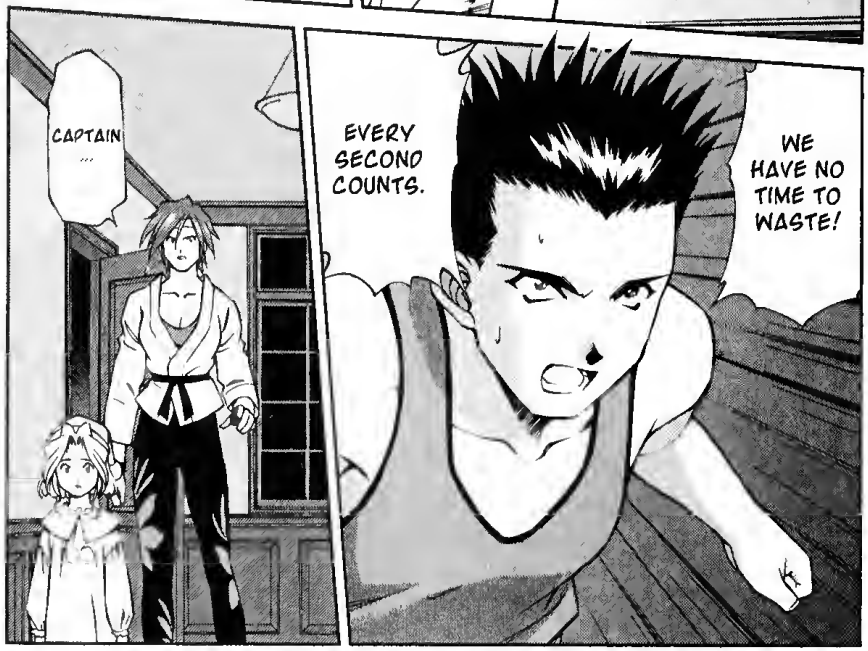

MARIA...

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGH!

ドサッ

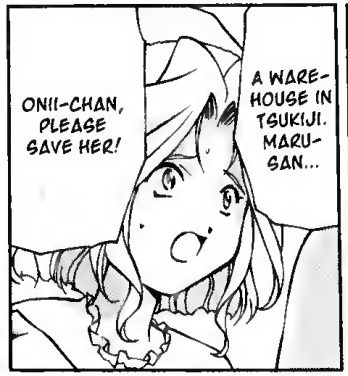
ミタナ

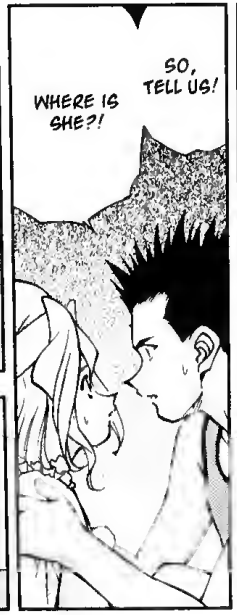
I'M COMING WITH YOU!
CAPTAIN!
TAKE COMMAND IN MY PLACE.
NO!
KANNA, YOU WAKE UP THE OTHERS!


CAPTAIN...
EVERY SECOND COUNTS.
WE HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE!

IT'S MARIA...
SOME BAD GUY CAUGHT HER

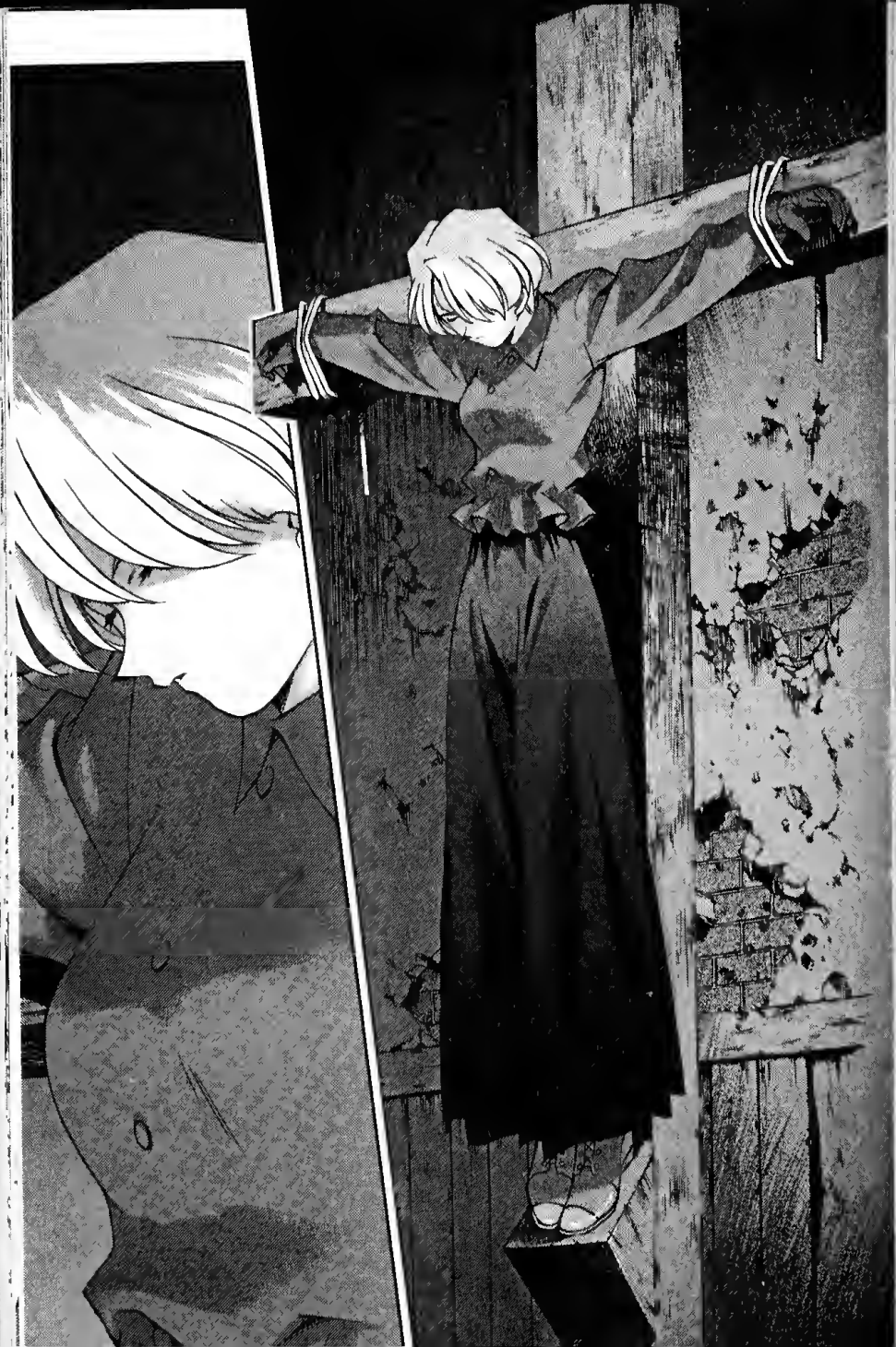
IRIS...
WHAT'S THE MATTER? DID YOU HAVE A NIGHTMARE?

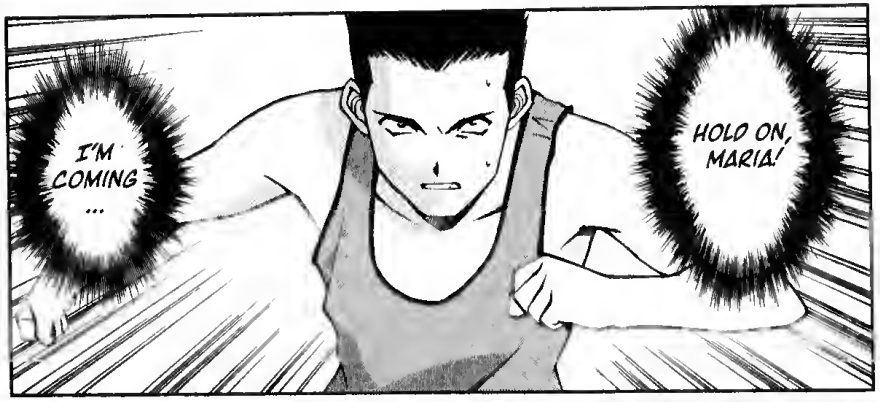

ONII-CHAN, PLEASE SAVE HER!
A WARE-HOUSE IN TSUKIJI. MARU-SAN...

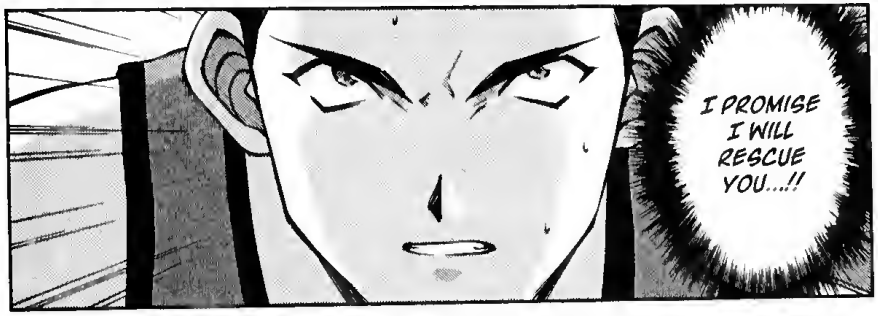

WHERE IS SHE?!
SO, TELL US!

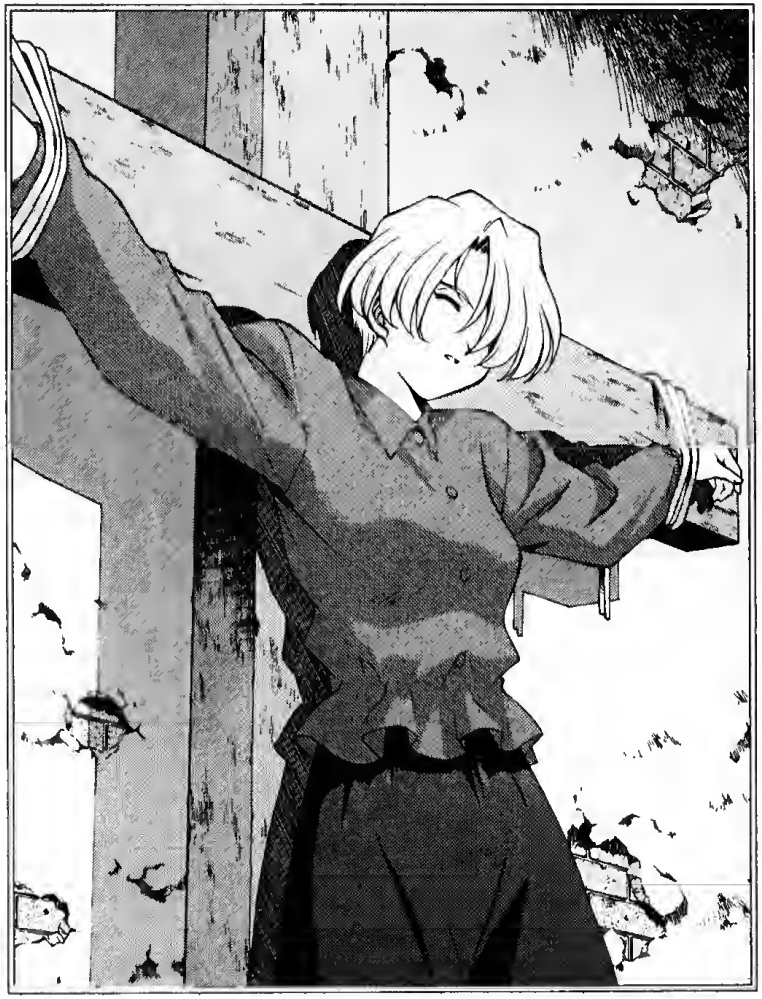
CAN YOU SEE HER, IRIS?
WHAT?!

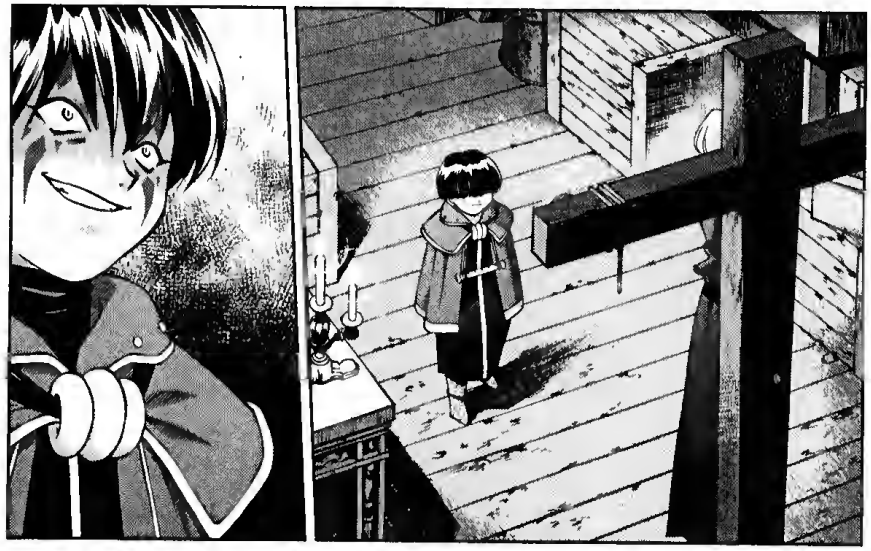
MARUSAN WARE-HOUSE, RIGHT?
TSUKIJI...



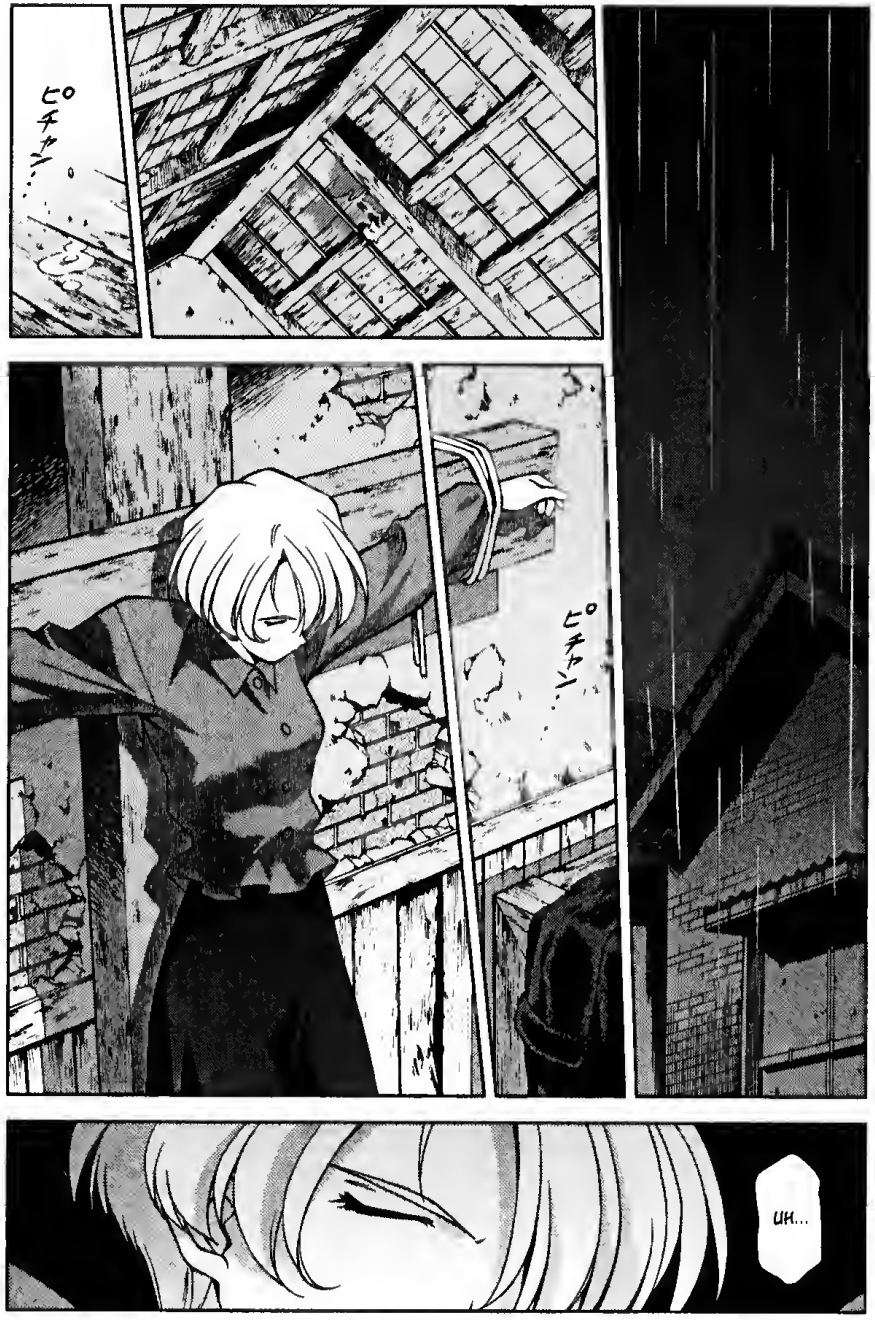

I'M COMING ...
HOLD ON, MARIA!


I PROMISE I WILL RESCUE YOU...!!





ARE YOU AWAKE, KAZUAR?
SETSUNA ...!!
NNGH!


ヒュオ...
ヒュオ...
UH...

I TIED IT NICE AND TIGHT!
STRUGGLE ALL YOU WANT, IT'S USELESS.
HN!
I CAN DO WHATEVER I PLEASE TO YOU, AND YOU'RE HELPLESS TO RESIST!
IT'S TERRIBLY EXCITING. KU KU KU!
I'M DISAP-POINT-ED.
TO FIND THAT OUR ENEMY...
...IS JUST TRASH LIKE YOU!

SAY WHAT YOU WILL.
YOU'RE GOING TO DIE SOON ANYWAY.
HA HA HA HA HA!
AND THEN... I'M GOING TO FLAUNT YOUR CORPSE TO YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS.
...AS YOU DIE A SLOW AND AGONIZING DEATH.
I'M GOING TO ENJOY WATCHING THIS PRETTY FACE TRANSFORM IN TERROR AND PAIN...
.....

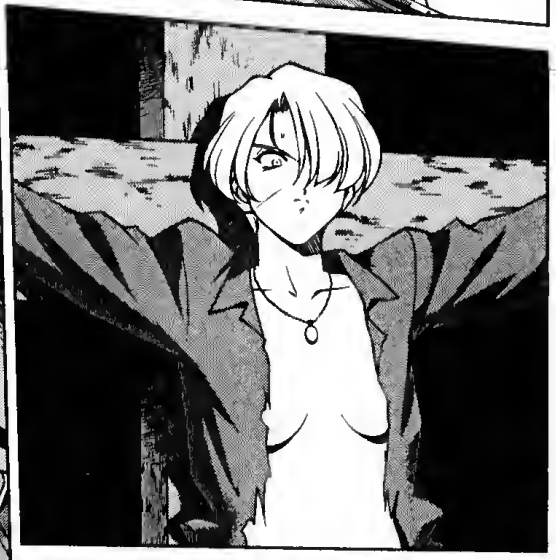
Ptoo
HUH!

PERHAPS A LITTLE LOWER...?
OR...

HAH!

SHOULD I START BY TEARING OFF YOUR LOVELY FACE...
HUH HUH HUH...

I CAN CUT THROUGH STEEL WITH THESE.
SO IT'D BE NO TROUBLE AT ALL FOR ME TO SLICE YOUR BODY RIGHT IN HALF.



ARE MY NAILS SHARD ENOUGH FOR YOU?
YOU LIKE THAT?

HUMPH.
I'M JUST APPALLED AT HOW LOW YOU CAN GET.
BUT...
IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME, DO IT QUICKLY.
I'M PREPARED FOR MY FATE!
...LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN KEEP UP THAT BRAVE FRONT AFTER THIS?!
HUH!
HOW VERY GALLANT OF YOU.

OR MAYBE...
...IT WOULD BE MORE INTERESTING TO CUT ALL YOUR CLOTHES AWAY FIRST.
HUH HUH HUH! WHAT DO YOU THINK, KAZUAR?
WHAT IS YOUR PLEASURE?

WHAT'S WRONG?
TOO FRIGHTENED TO SPEAK?
.....
IF YOU ASK ME...
IT WOULD BE MOST ENJOYABLE IF YOU WOULD SCREAM AND CRY FOR MERCY.

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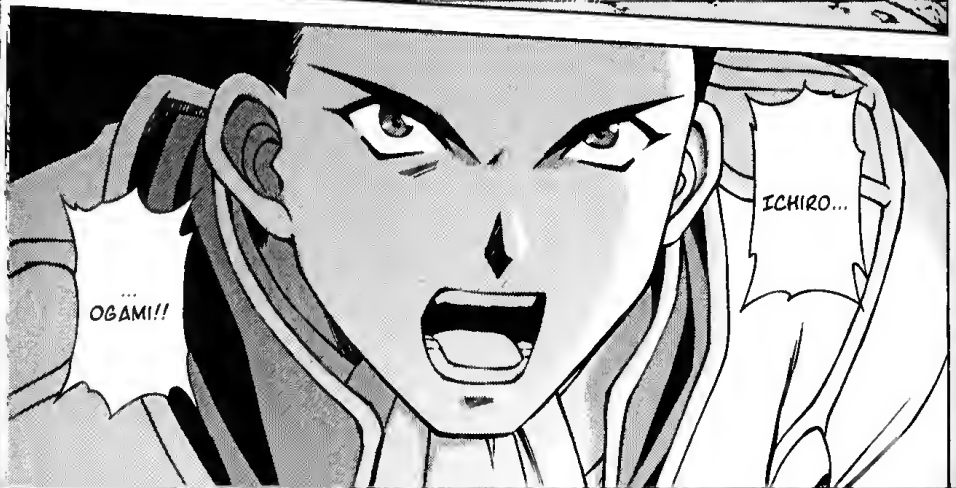
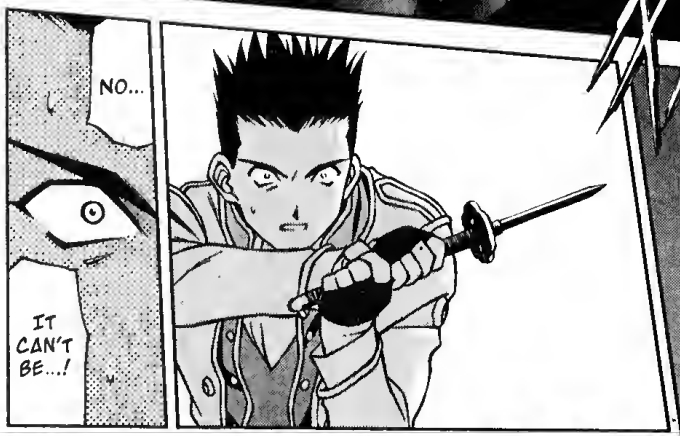
IMPERIAL FIGHTING TROUPE CAPTAIN, FLOWER DIVISION!


ICHIRO...
...OGAMI!!

WHO...
WHO DARES ...?!

YAAAAAH!
AS IF A MERE MORTAL COULD FOLLOW MY MOVEMENTS!!
YOU FOOL!
WHAT?!

HANG ON, I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE!!
MARIA!
ENSIGN!!
WE WERE JUST GETTING TO THE GOOD PART.
BAH!
I'LL FINISH BOTH OF YOU OFF TOGETHER!!
CAPTAIN AND DEPUTY CAPTAIN OF THE FIGHTING TROUPE...
BUT NO MATTER!


NO...
IT CAN'T BE...!

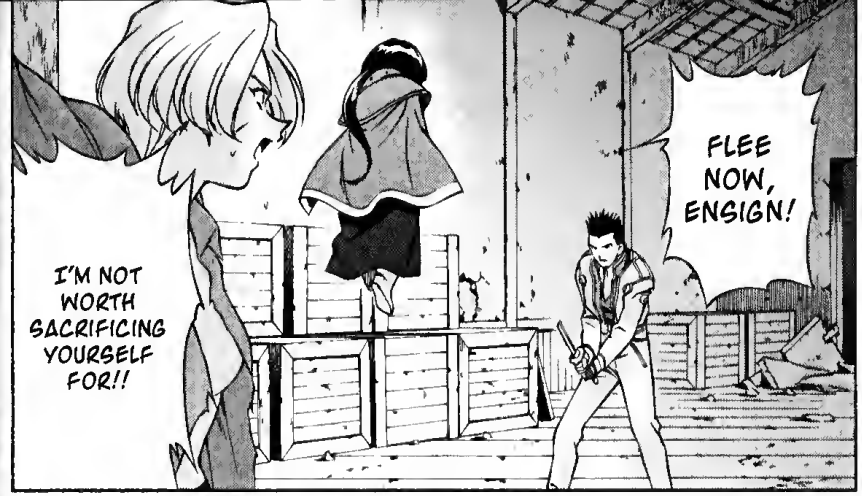
GRR...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT SWORD NOW?!
HA HA HA HA HA!

KU...
ENSIGN !!

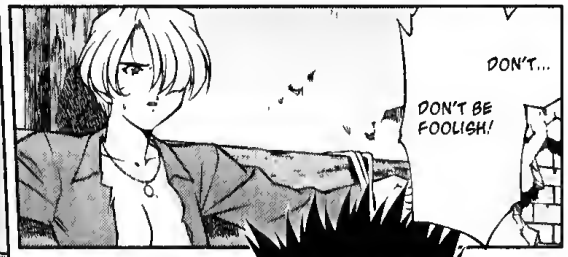
HOW ABOUT THIS?!
IN THAT CASE...

THAT BLOW SHOULD HAVE TAKEN YOUR ARM OFF.
OOOH... IS THAT SOME KIND OF SPECIAL UNIFORM?

ENSIGN!
IT'S ONLY FITTING...
... THAT YOU DIE BY DECAPI-TATION!!
BEHIND YOU!!

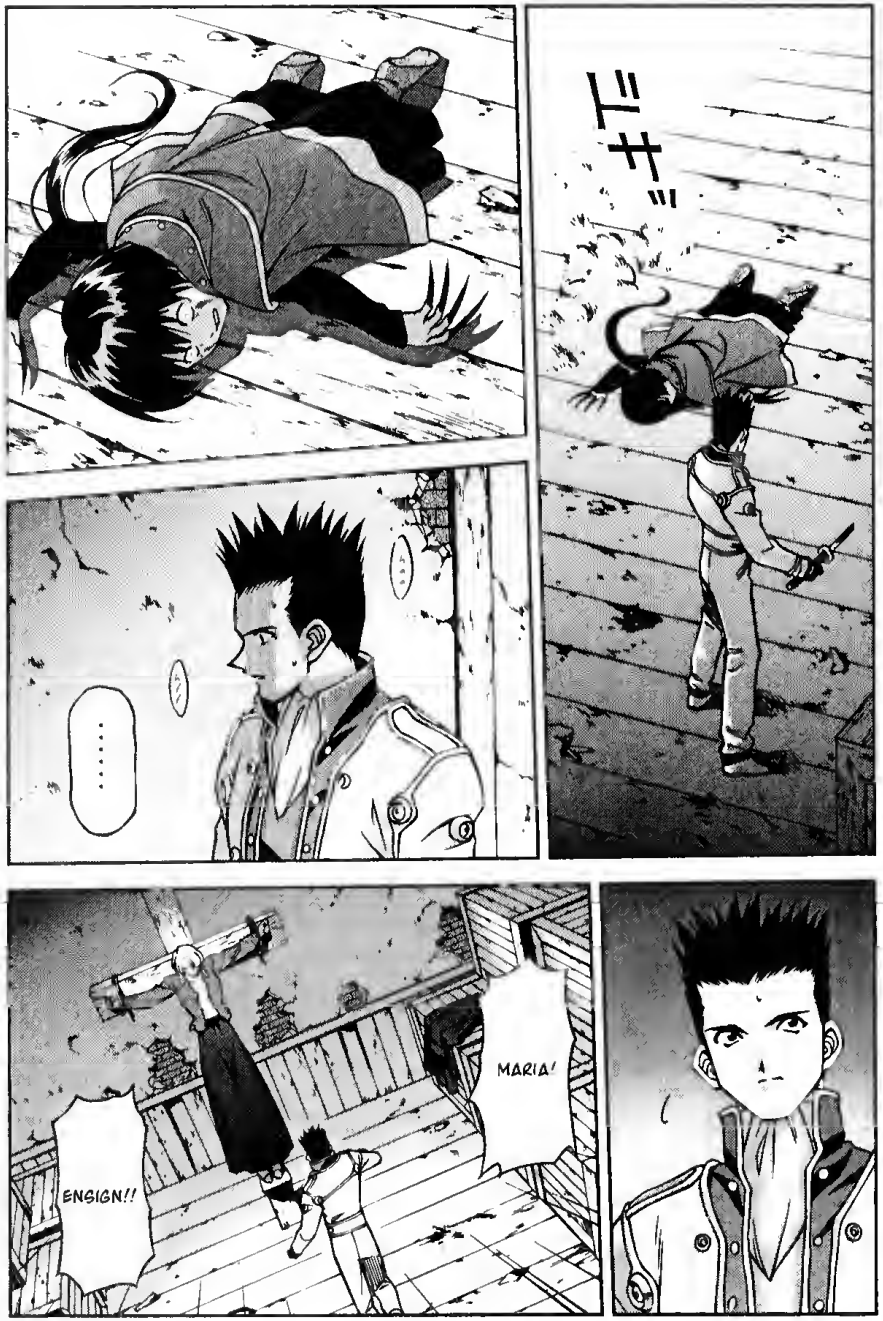

I'M NOT WORTH SACRIFICING YOURSELF FOR!!
FLEE NOW, ENSIGN!

ENSIGN ...


DON'T...
DON'T BE FOOLISH!

BRAVE WORDS FOR SOMEONE WHO IS HELPLESS BEFORE ME.
HUMPH!

IT'S MY JOB AS CAPTAIN TO PROTECT THE MEMBERS OF THE FLOWER TROUPE!
I'D RISK MY LIFE IF IT MEANT BEING ABLE TO SAVE YOU, MARIA!



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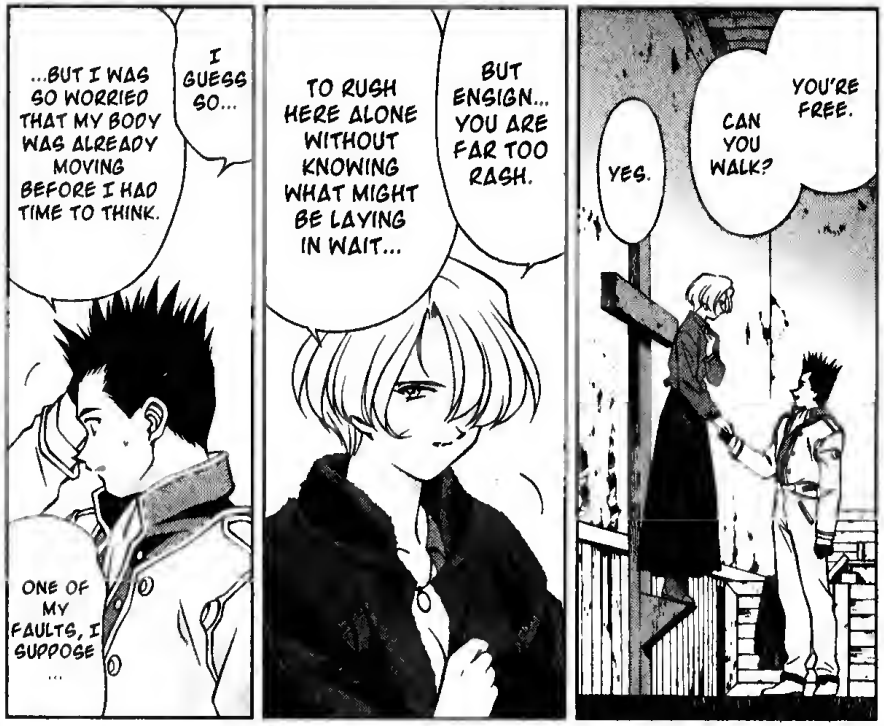
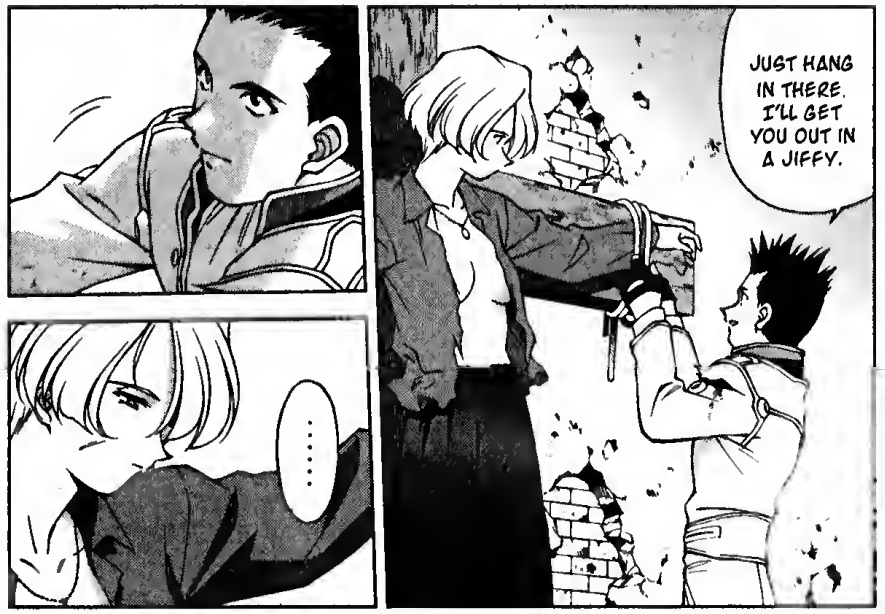
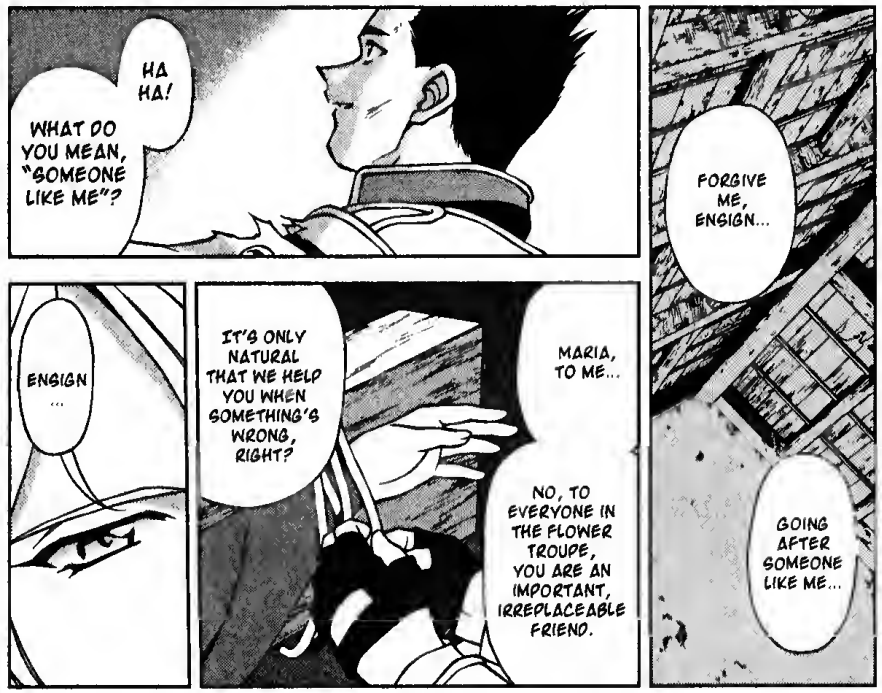

YOU'RE FREE.
CAN YOU WALK?
YES.
BUT ENSIGN... YOU ARE FAR TOO RASH.
TO RUSH HERE ALONE WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT MIGHT BE LAYING IN WAIT...
I GUESS SO...
...BUT I WAS SO WORRIED THAT MY BODY WAS ALREADY MOVING BEFORE I HAD TIME TO THINK.
ONE OF MY FAULTS, I SUPPOSE...

THANK YOU
CAPTAIN.
.....
MARIA...


JUST HANG IN THERE. I'LL GET YOU OUT IN A JIFFY.
.....


HA HA!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SOMEONE LIKE ME"?
FORGIVE ME, ENSIGN...
GOING AFTER SOMEONE LIKE ME...
ENSIGN...
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT WE HELP YOU WHEN SOMETHING'S WRONG, RIGHT?
MARIA, TO ME...
NO, TO EVERYONE IN THE FLOWER TROUPE, YOU ARE AN IMPORTANT, IRREPLACEABLE FRIEND.

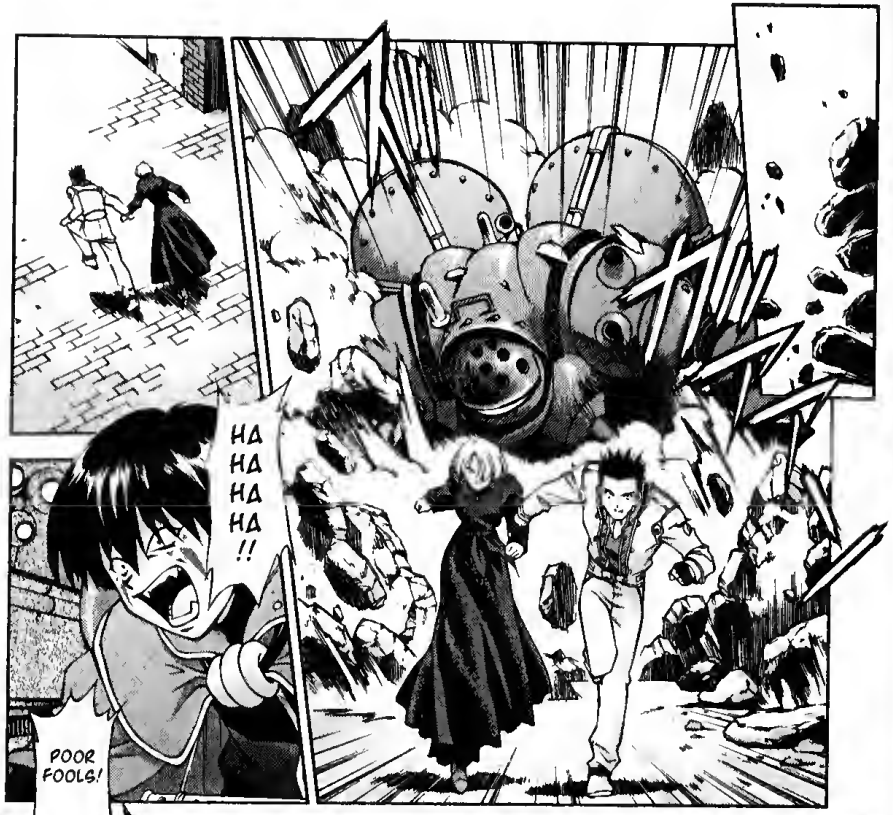
110

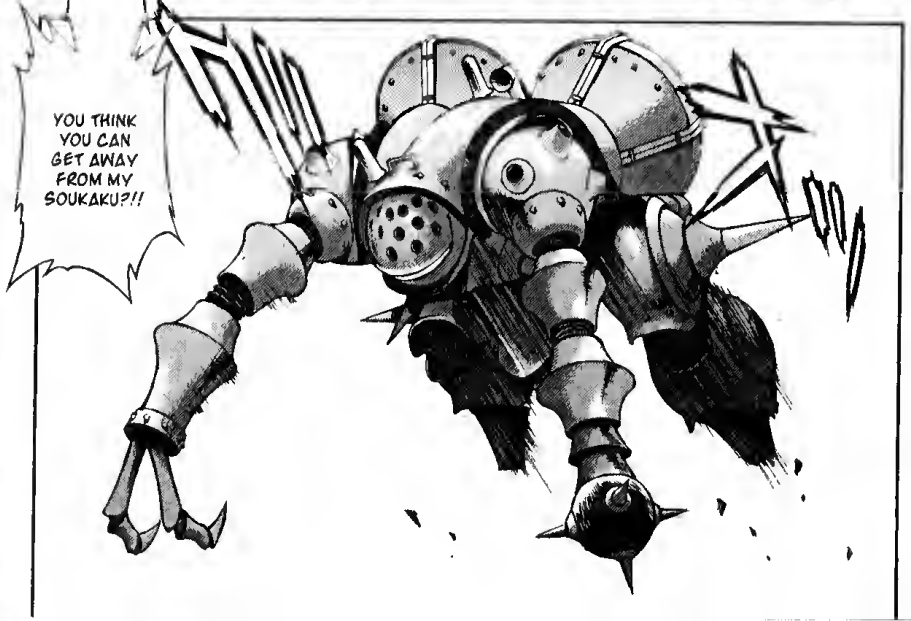
SETSUNA ...!!
STILL ALIVE...
YOU'RE ...

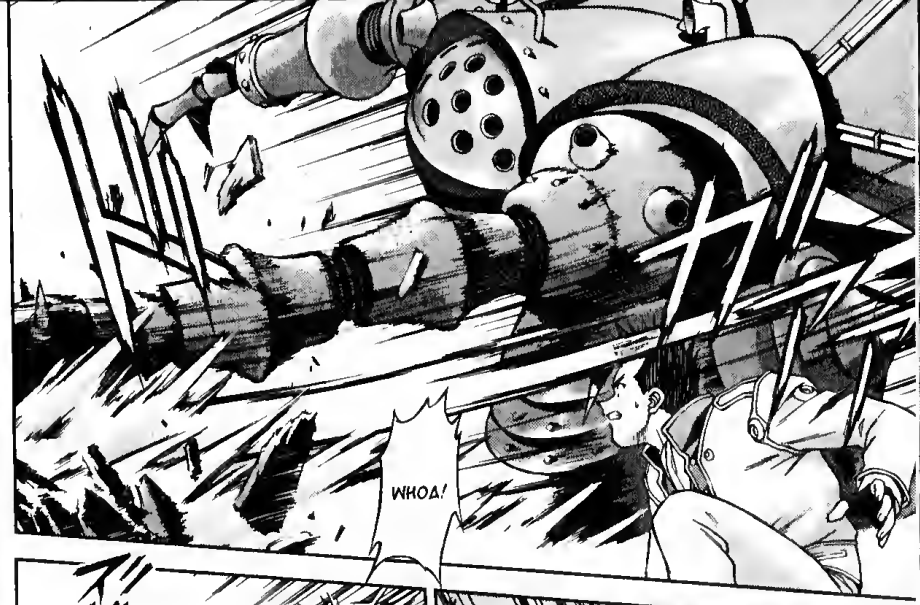
IT'S ONE OF THOSE..
...DEMON SOLDIERS?!

YOU...
HA-
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH THIS...
HA-

I SHALL SEND YOU BOTH TO HELL!!
COME! SOUKAKU!!


HA HA HA HA !!
POOR FOOLS!


YOU THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY FROM MY SOUKAKU?!!

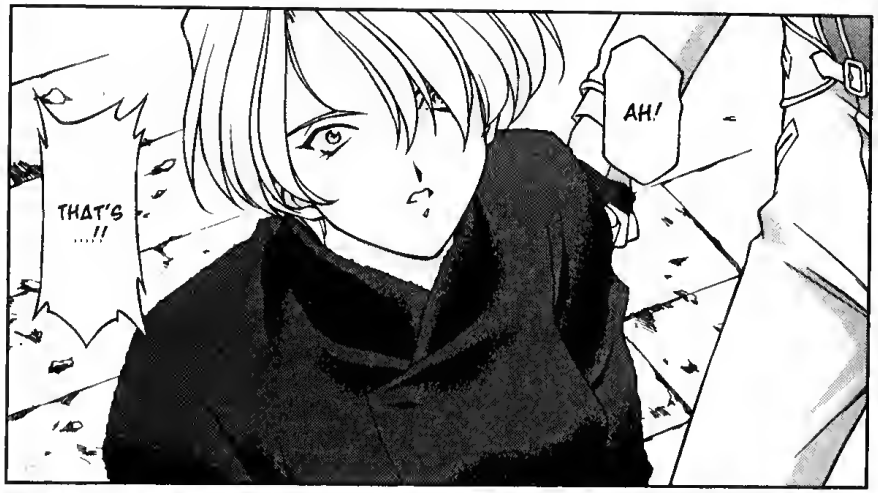

WHOA!

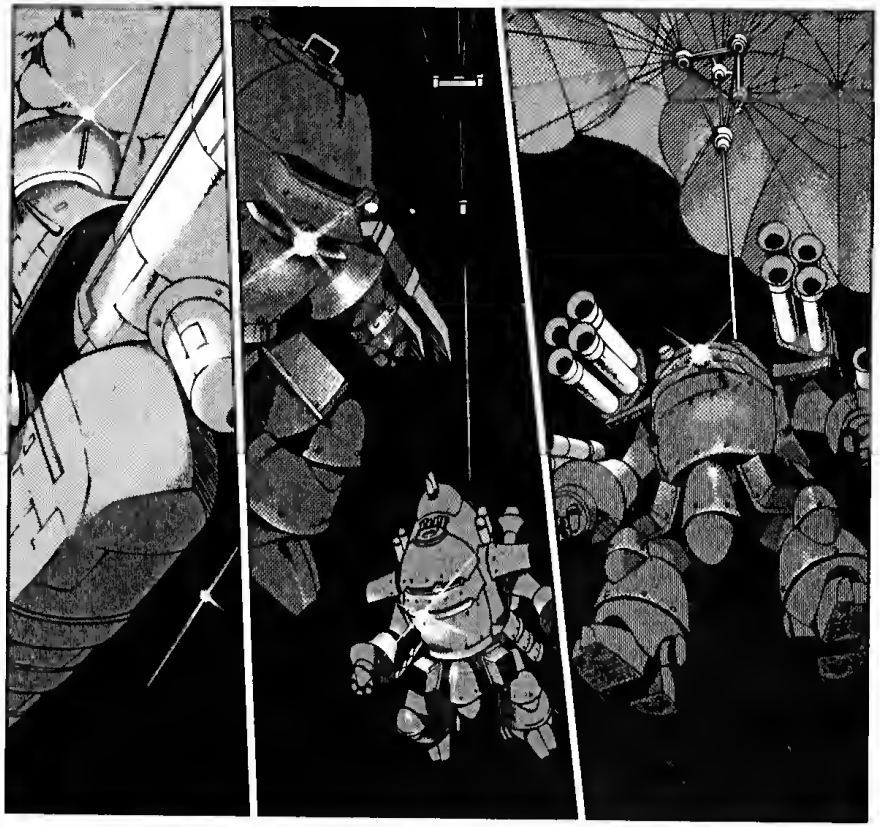
RUN FOR IT, MARIA!
MY GUN HAS NO EFFECT.

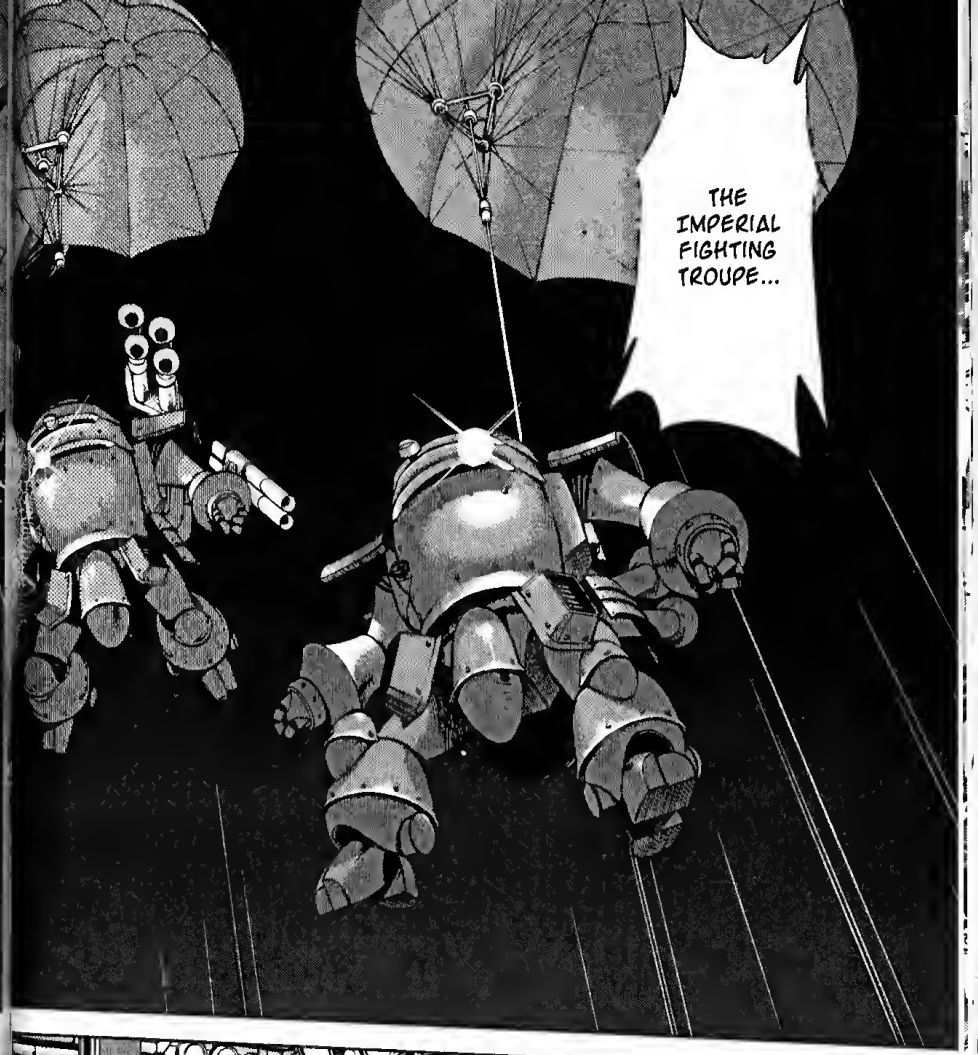
I'M GOING TO TURN YOU INTO CHUNKS OF BLOODY MEAT!!
DIE!!

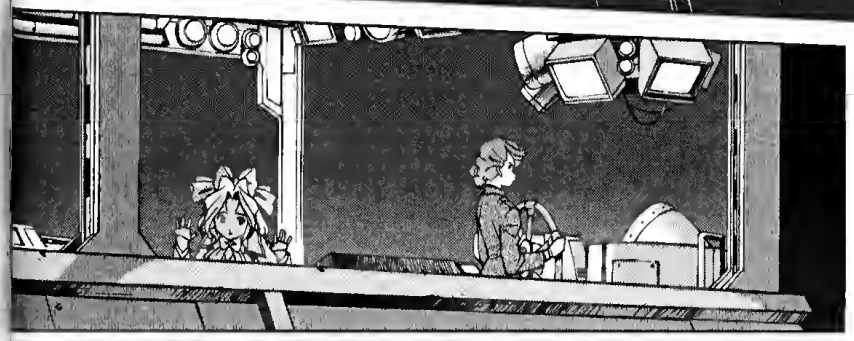
TCH!
HEE HEE HEE HEE!
WE'RE DONE PLAYING AROUND.

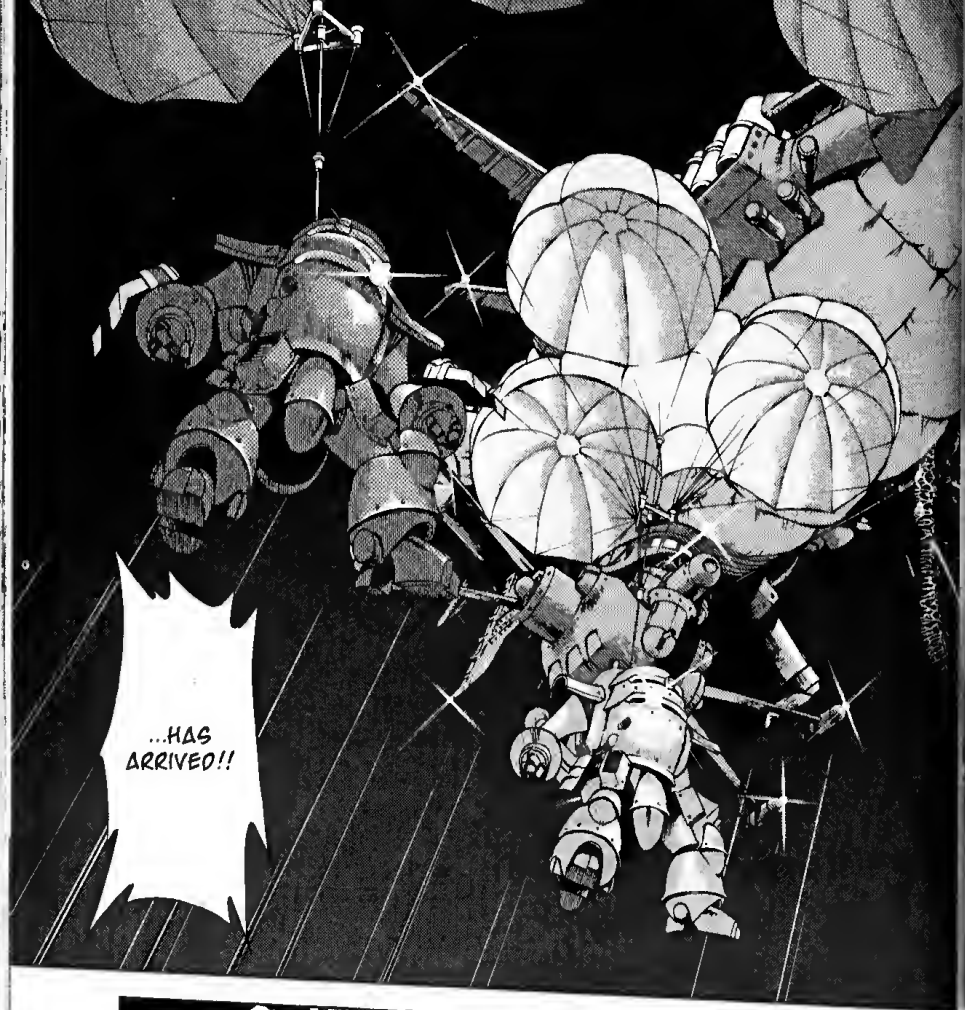
WHERE DID...?!
WHA ...?!


AH!
THAT'S ...!!




THE IMPERIAL FIGHTING TROUPE...

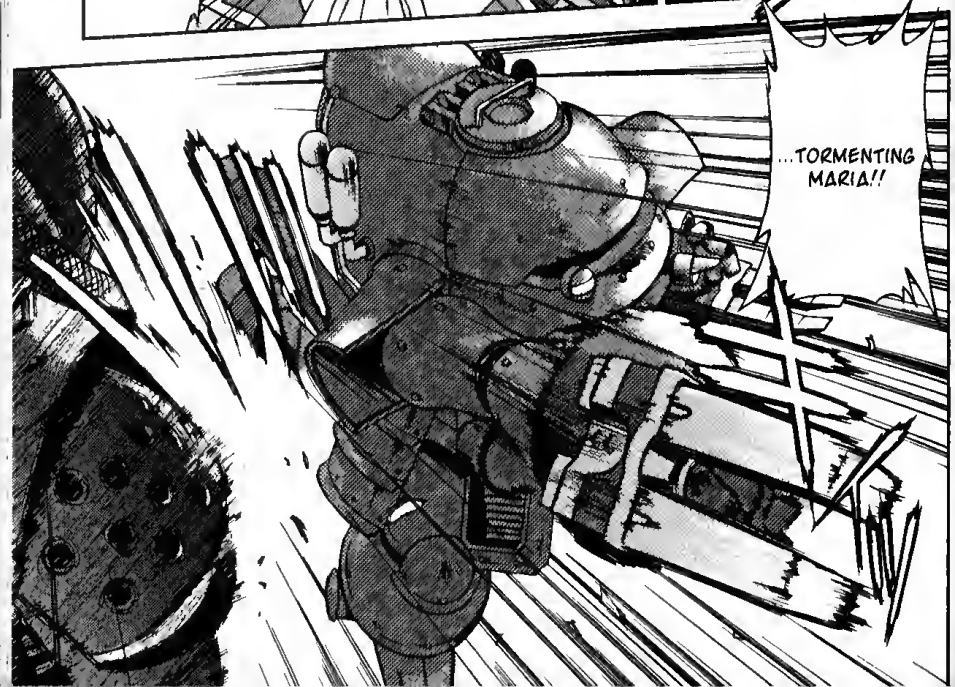



...HAS ARRIVED!!

EVERY ONE!

CURSES! I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!

YOU PERVERTED BASTARD!
THIS IS FOR...


...TORMENTING MARIA!!

ERRRGH!
OGAMI-HAN! MARIA-HAN!
WE'VE COME TO HELP!!

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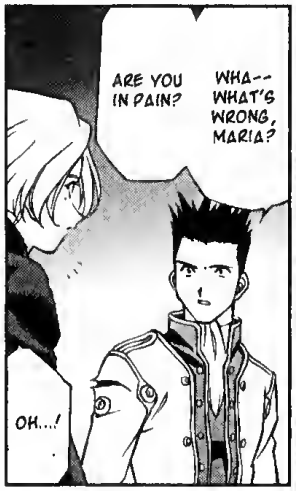
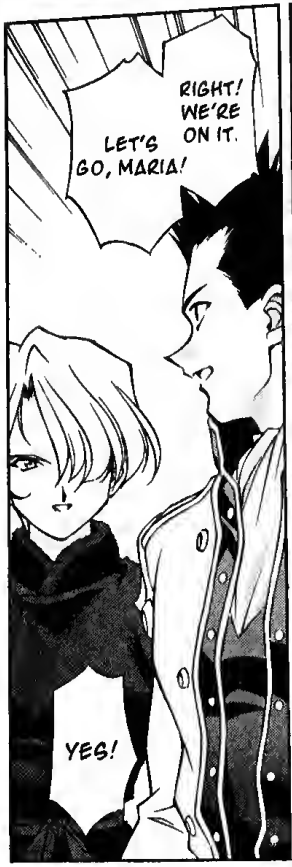
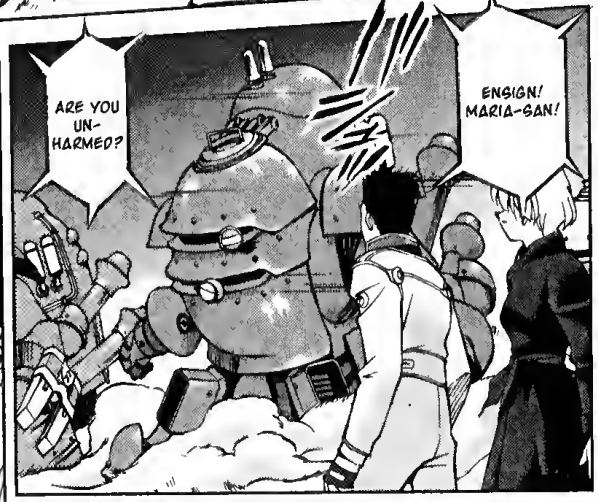
SHOGEIMARU IS ILLUMINATING THE AREA FOR US!
THERE WE GO!


ARE YOU IN PAIN?
WHA-- WHAT'S WRONG, MARIA?
OH...!

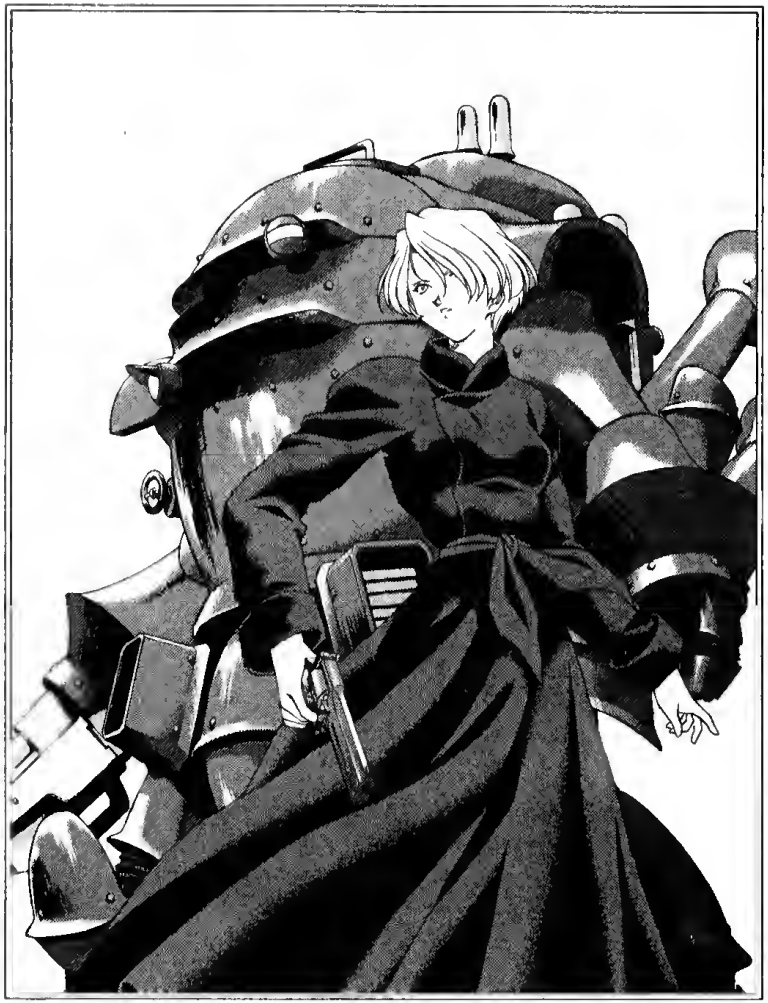
ガシャアアル


LET'S GO, MARIA!
RIGHT! WE'RE ON IT.
YES!

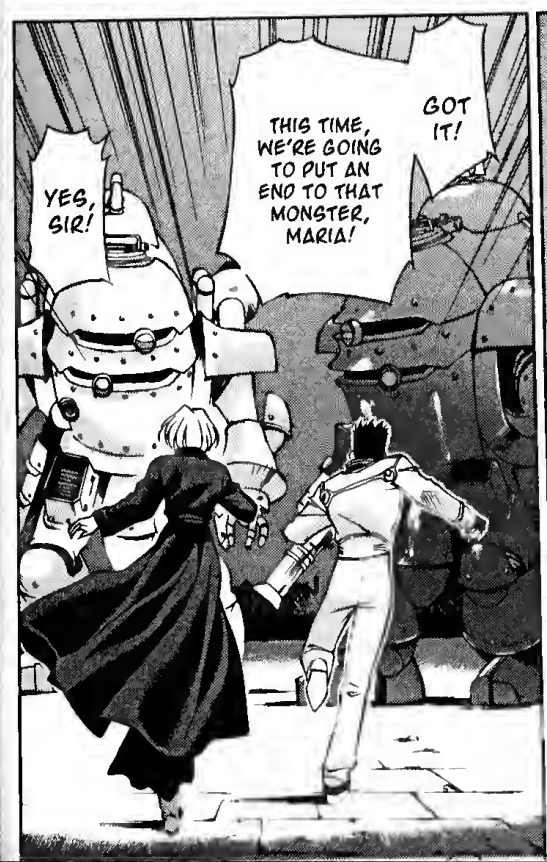

ARE YOU UN-HARMED?
ENSIGN! MARIA-SAN!

WE'LL HOLD HIM OFF WHILE YOU HOP ON-BOARD!
WE'VE GOT YOUR KOUBU HERE, TOO.

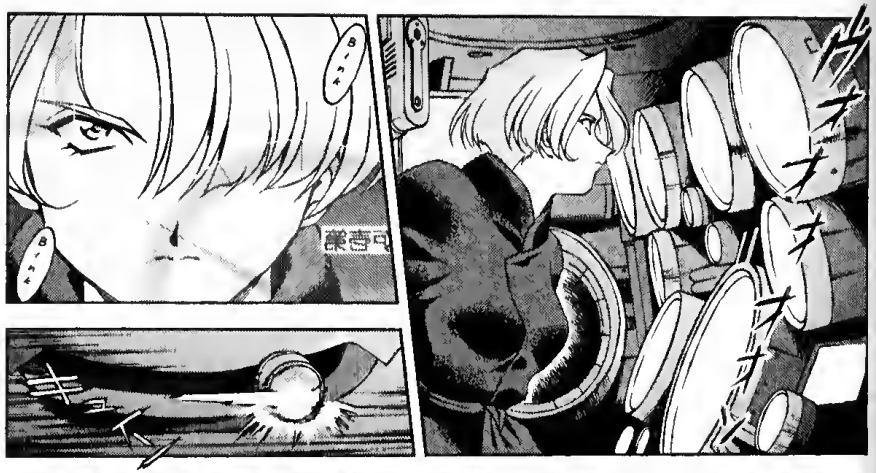
GOOD TO SEE YOU, EVERY ONE!
WE'RE FINE.

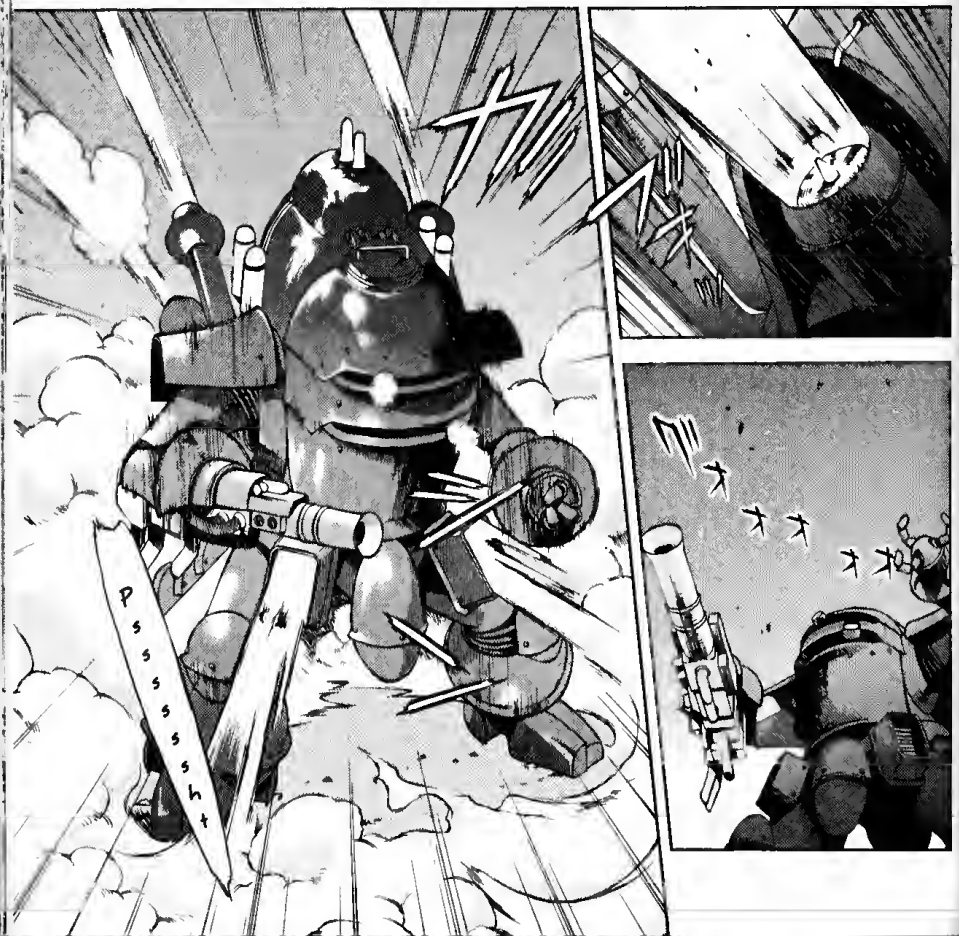


.....
WELL, MAYBE A LITTLE...
...BUT I'M ALL RIGHT NOW.


YES, SIR!
THIS TIME, WE'RE GOING TO PUT AN END TO THAT MONSTER, MARIA!
GOT IT!

WE SHOULD HELP OUT THE OTHERS AS FAST AS POSSIBLE.
MORE IMPORTANT, WE NEED TO HURRY, CAPTAIN.

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Haaaaah!!
Gyaaah!
URK!

HM!
AYE, SIR!!
START UP COM-PLETE!
HERE WE GO, MARIA!

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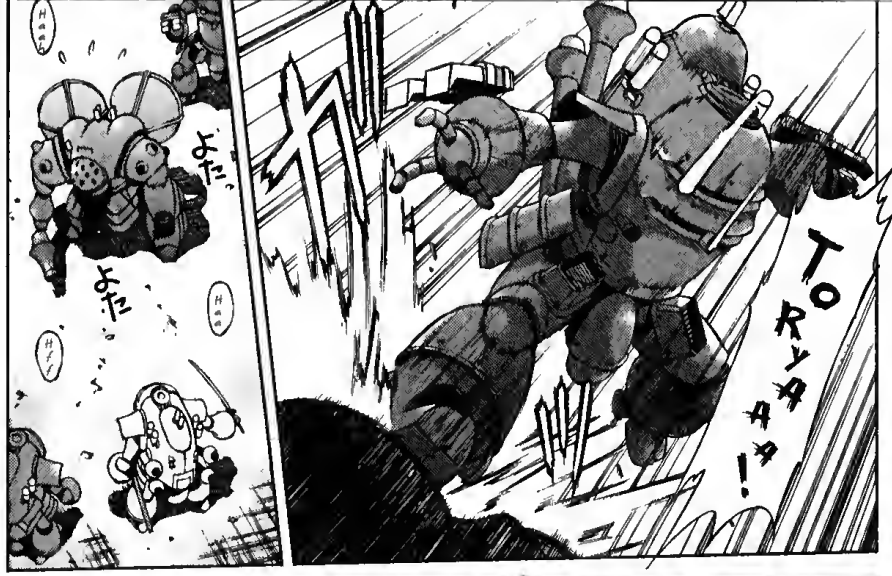
DON'T GET TOO COCKY NOW...
HEY, LADIES...

ER...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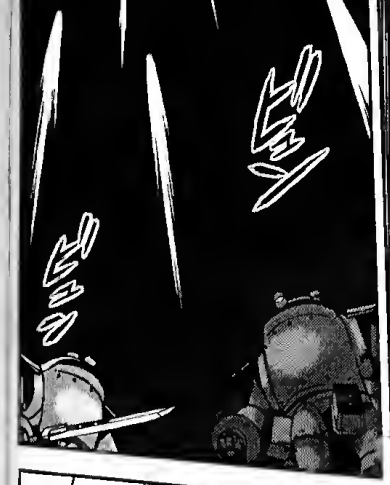
ハア
TO RYA AA!

WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING NOW?
YOU IDIOT!
AND YOU COWARDS CALL YOURSELVES ALLIES OF JUSTICE?!
ALL OF YOU ATTACKING A SINGLE ENEMY?
NRRGH!

Kyaaaa!

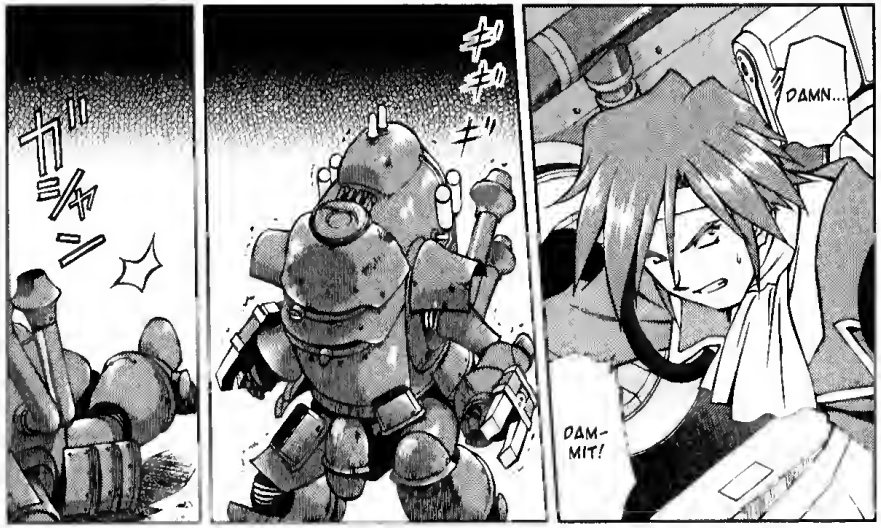


WHAT IS THIS?!
MY...

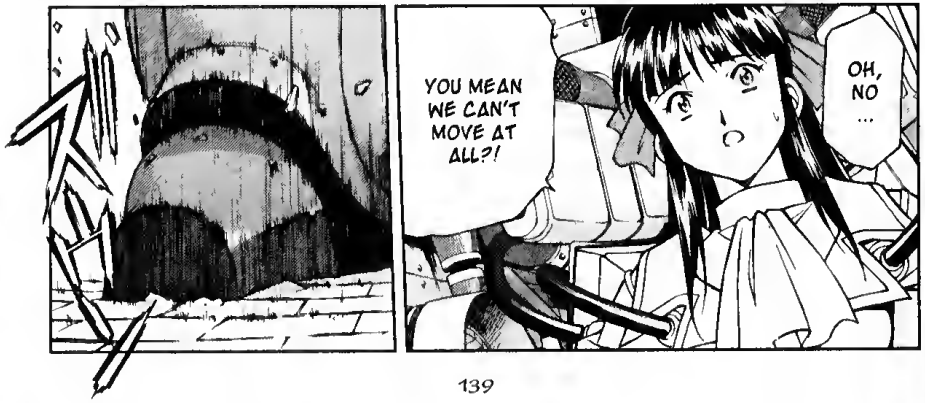
!!

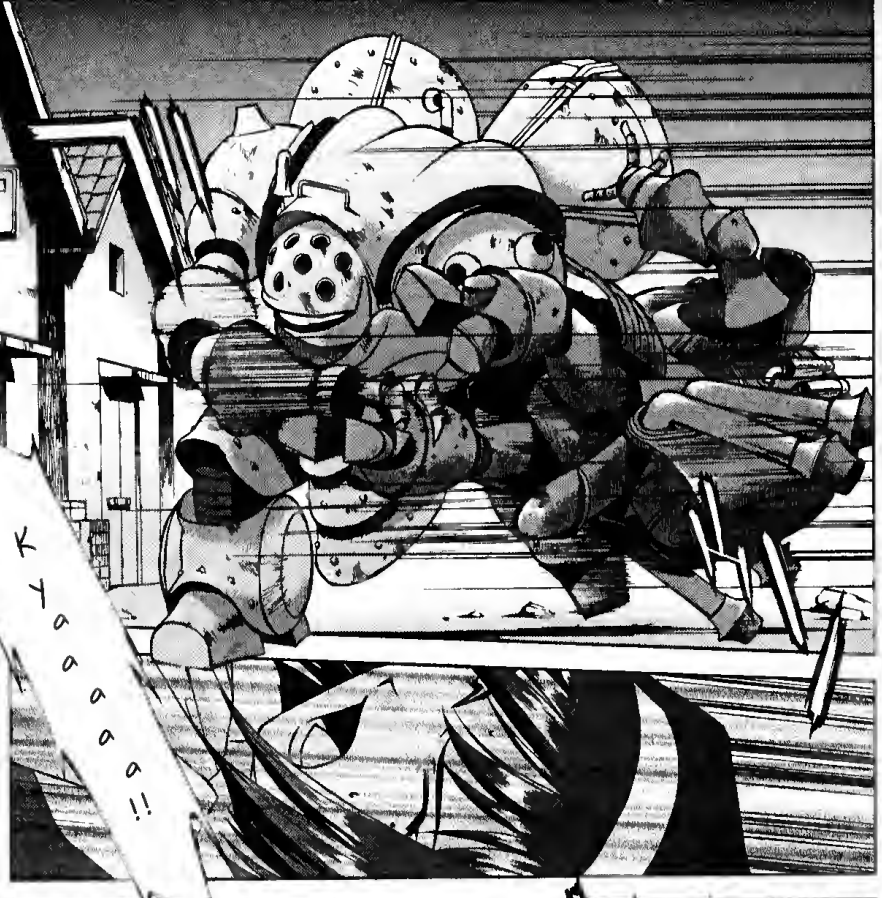
MAGNIFICENCE!!
DARK AIR-BLADE OF SLAUGHTER!

AH HA HA HA!
NOW YOU TRULY UNDERSTAND WHO YOU ARE FACING!!

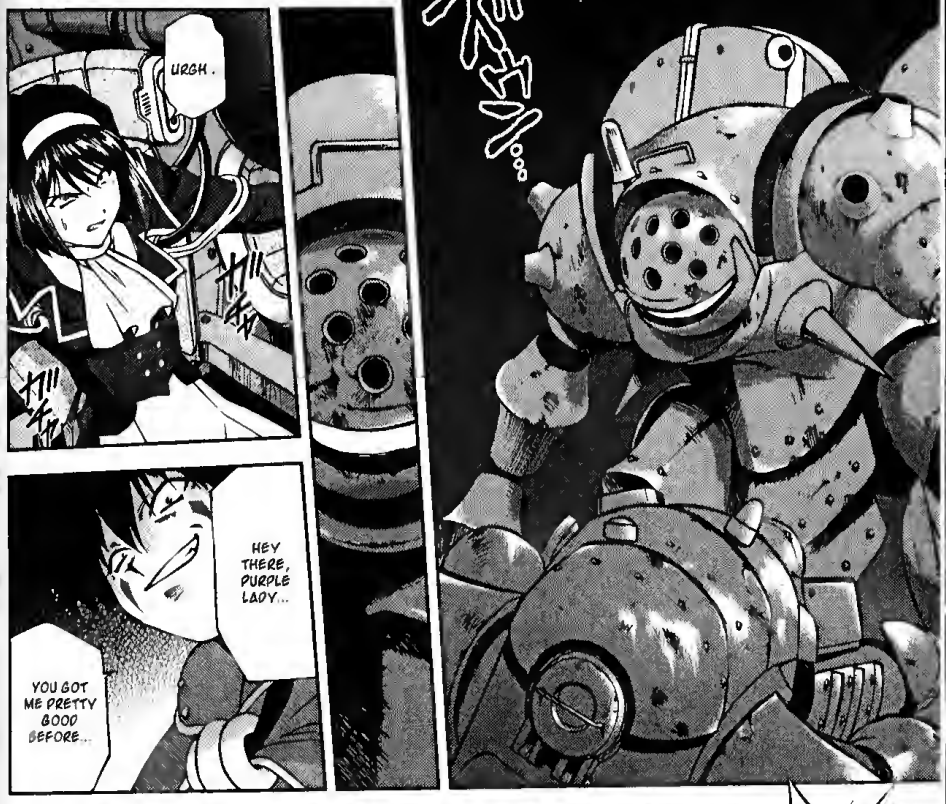

DAMN...
DAM-MIT!

H-HEY. I CAN'T GET UP!
WHAT'S GOING ON, KOHRAN?!
I'M NOT SURE, BUT...
...IT SEEMS THAT THE LAST BLAST TEMPORARILY WIPED OUT THE DRIVE SYSTEM.
YOU'RE KIDDING!


OH, NO ...
YOU MEAN WE CAN'T MOVE AT ALL?!

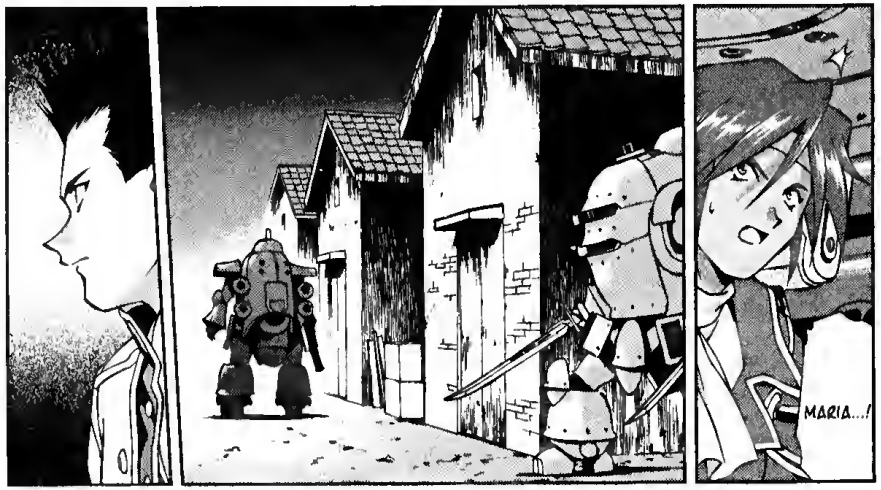

Kyaaaaa!!

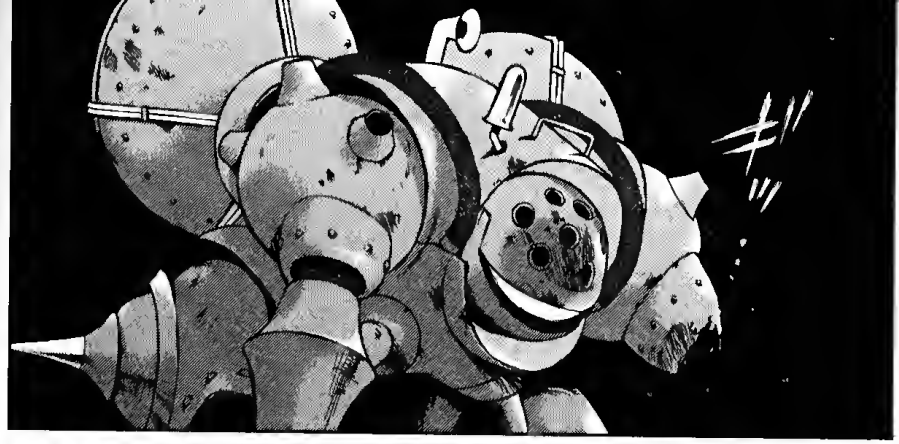
SUMIRE!!
SUMIRE-SAN!!

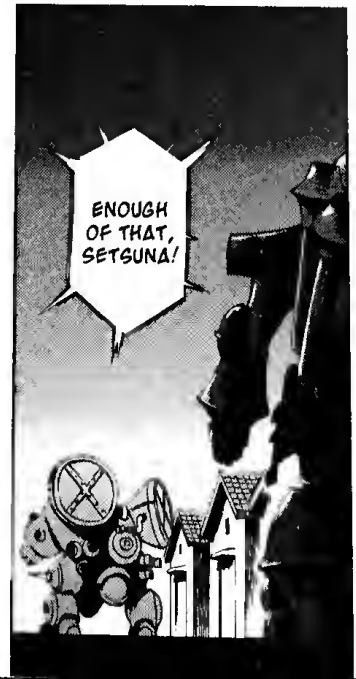

URGH.
HEY THERE, PURPLE LADY...
YOU GOT ME PRETTY GOOD BEFORE...

AARGH!
...SO HERE'S SOME PAYBACK!

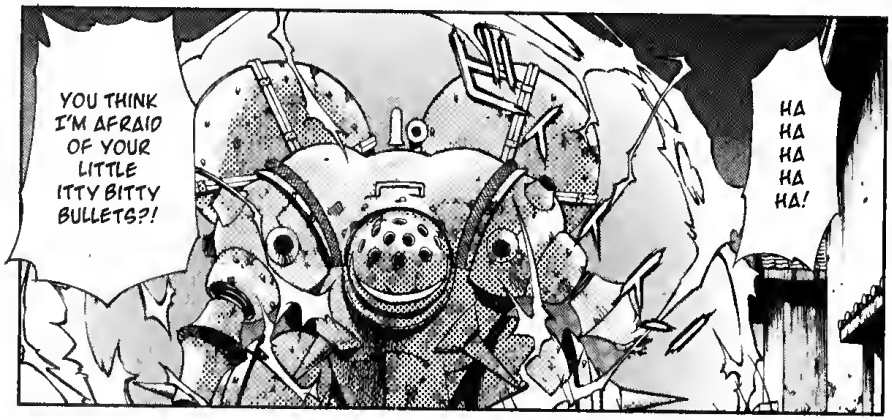
TOUCH THEM...
...AND YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME!!


MARIA...!



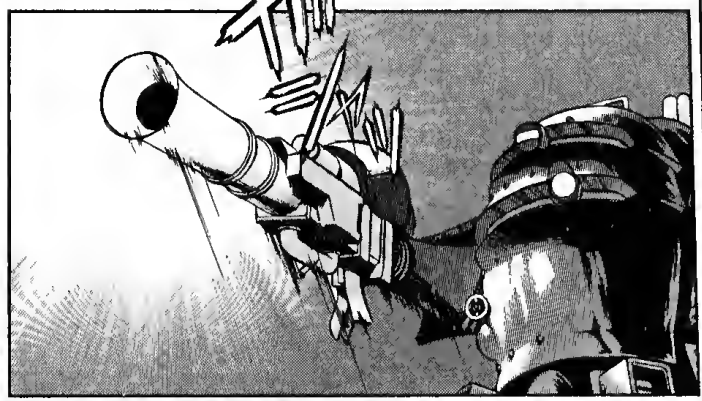

ENOUGH OF THAT, SETSUNA!

HEE HEE HEE HEE...
YOU'RE ALL GOING TO DIE SLOWLY...


YOU THINK I'M AFRAID OF YOUR LITTLE ITTY BITTY BULLETS?!
HA HA HA HA HA!

I LET YOU GO...
KAZUAR.
...YET YOU RETURNED TO BE SLAIN?

NO.
I CAME BACK TO KILL YOU.

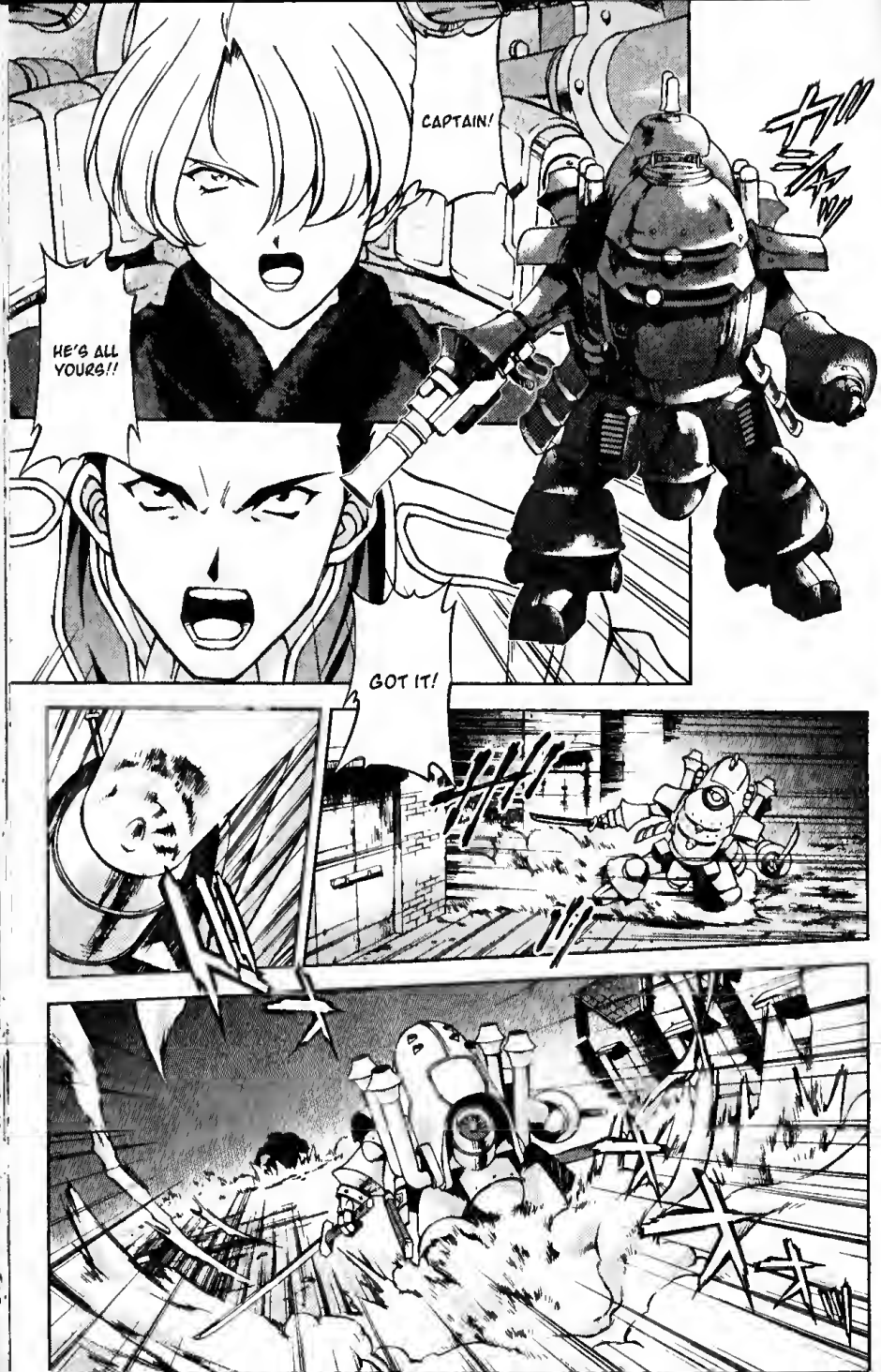


SNYEGUROCHKA!!*
*RUSSIAN FOR "SNOW MAIDEN"

TIME TO DIE, KAZUAR!!
THE WOMAN I AM NOW...
...CAN NEVER BE DEFEATED BY SCUM LIKE YOU!

W IG
HIG
SIBLE?
WHAT?!
UGYAAAAH!

NO BULLET CAN EVEN SCRATCH SOUKAKU--
SILLY GIRL!
AH HA HA HA!

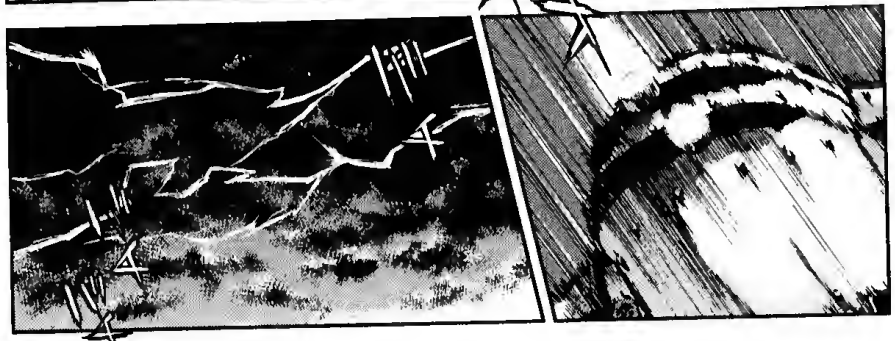

CAPTAIN!
HE'S ALL YOURS!!
GOT IT!

MARIA'S SPECIAL ABILITY...!
INCREDIBLE!
SO, THAT'S...
!!

I CAN'T MOVE!!
DAM-MIT!

AAARGH!
Urraaah!

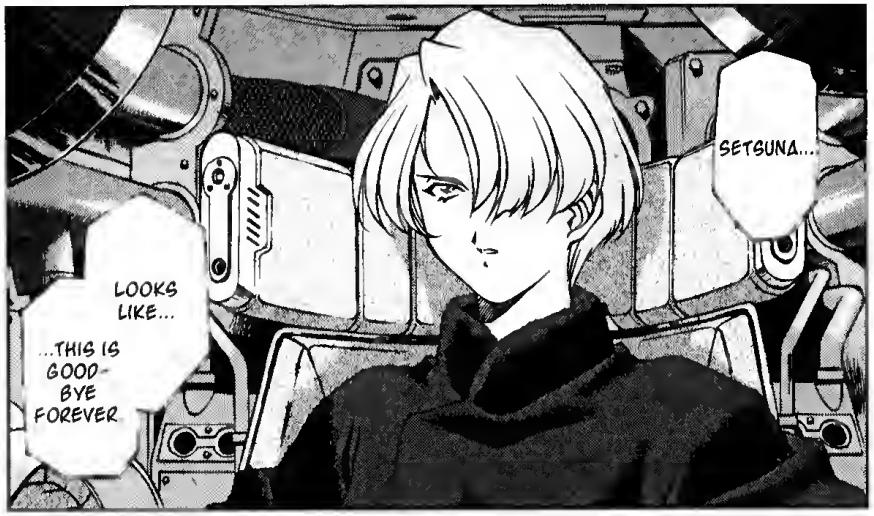
Beyond measurable value
Reiryoku
MARIA-HAN AND OGAMI-HAN'S REIRYOKU READING IS...
OO OO

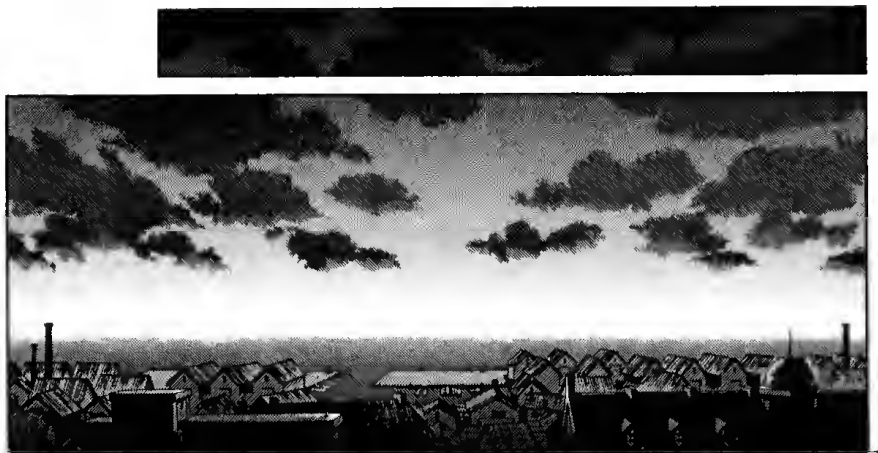


IMPOSSIBLE!!
I CAN'T LOSE...
NO... IT CAN'T BE...

BEGONE!
SETSUNA!!
RRAAAGH!

ゴオオオ


SETSUNA...
LOOKS LIKE...
...THIS IS GOOD-BYE FOREVER



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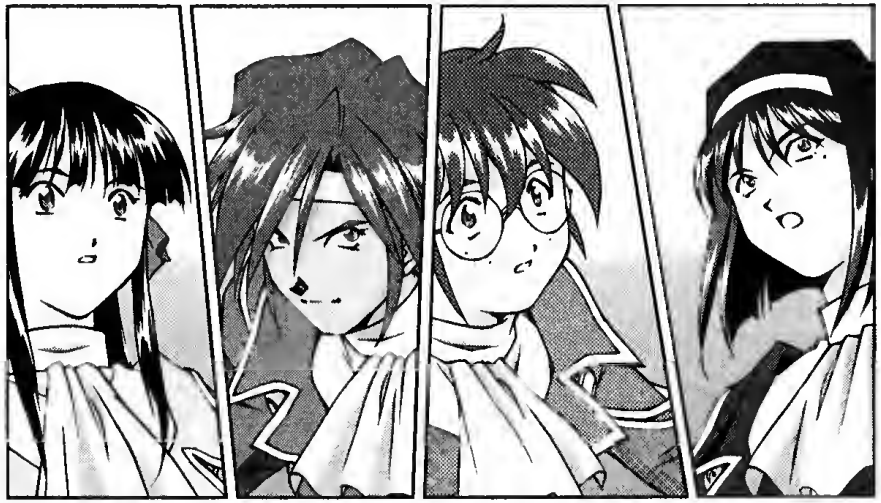
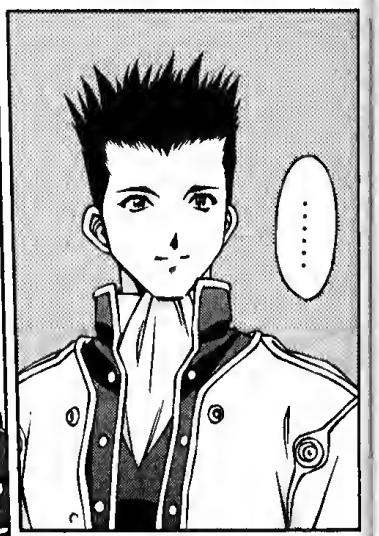


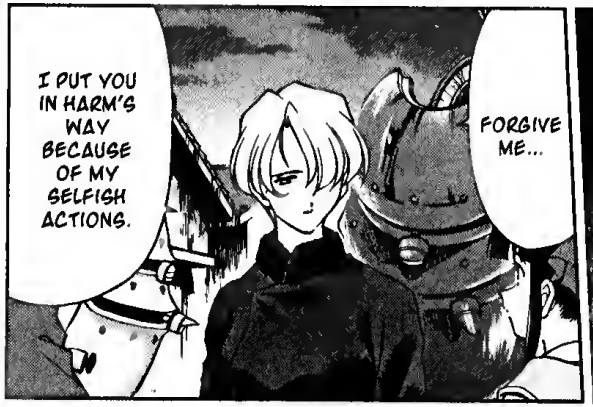
EVERYONE...
THANK YOU...

BESIDES, WE ALL ENDED UP BEING RESCUED BY YOU AND OGAMI-HAN.
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE HELP EACH OTHER THROUGH TROUBLED TIMES, MARIA-SAN!

I'M GONNA KEEL OVER, I'M SO HUNGRY!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
YO, CAPTAIN!


.....

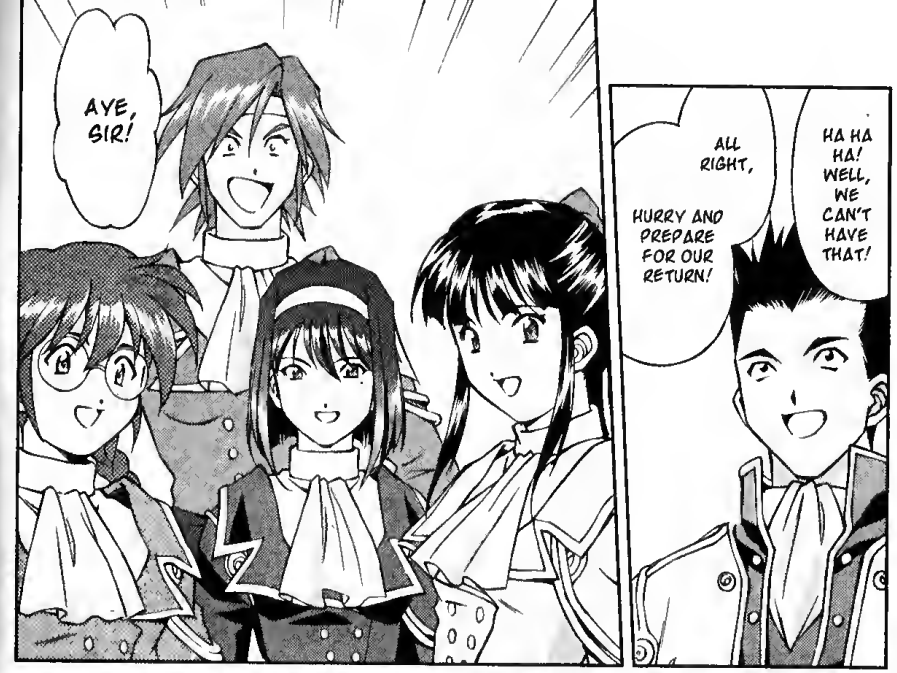
WELL, THANK GOODNESS.
MARIA IS SAFE, AND WE GOT RID OF THAT IMP SETSUNA.
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL!

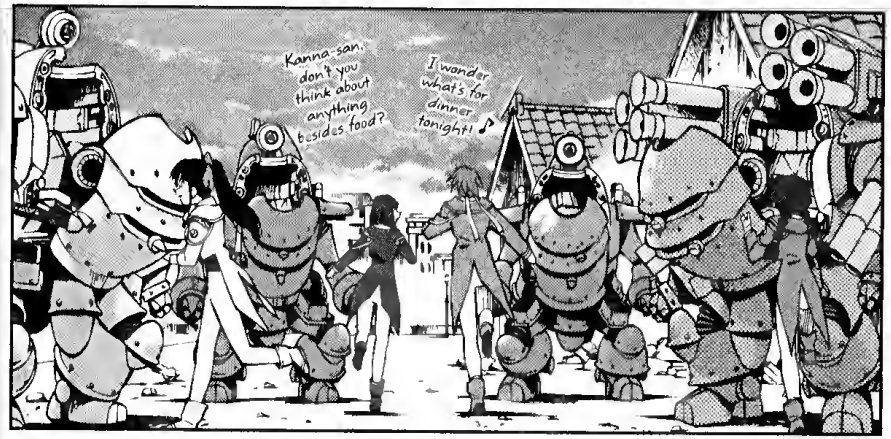

FORGIVE ME...
I PUT YOU IN HARM'S WAY BECAUSE OF MY SELFISH ACTIONS.

DON'T BE FOOLISH.
WE'RE ALL COMRADES IN THE FLOWER DIVISION.
OF COURSE WE LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

.....

HAVING GOOD COMRADES...
...IS A WONDERFUL THING, ISN'T IT?
YES.
I WAS JUST THINKING THE EXACT SAME THING...
A Girl Named Kazuar-End of Act


AYE, SIR!
ALL RIGHT, HURRY AND PREPARE FOR OUR RETURN!
HA HA HA! WELL, WE CAN'T HAVE THAT!


Kanna-san, don't you think about anything besides food?
I wonder what's for dinner tonight! ♪

CAPTAIN...
YES, MARIA?

.....

アイリス＆紅蘭

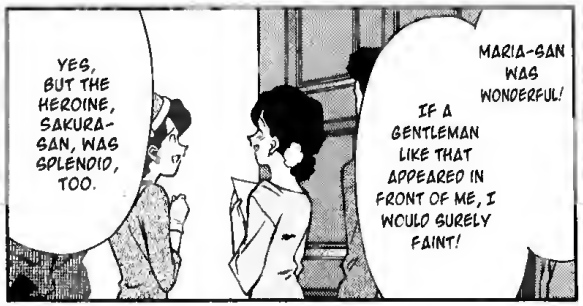
Iris and Kohran

帝国華撃団

Imperial Fighting Troupe

T E I G E K I

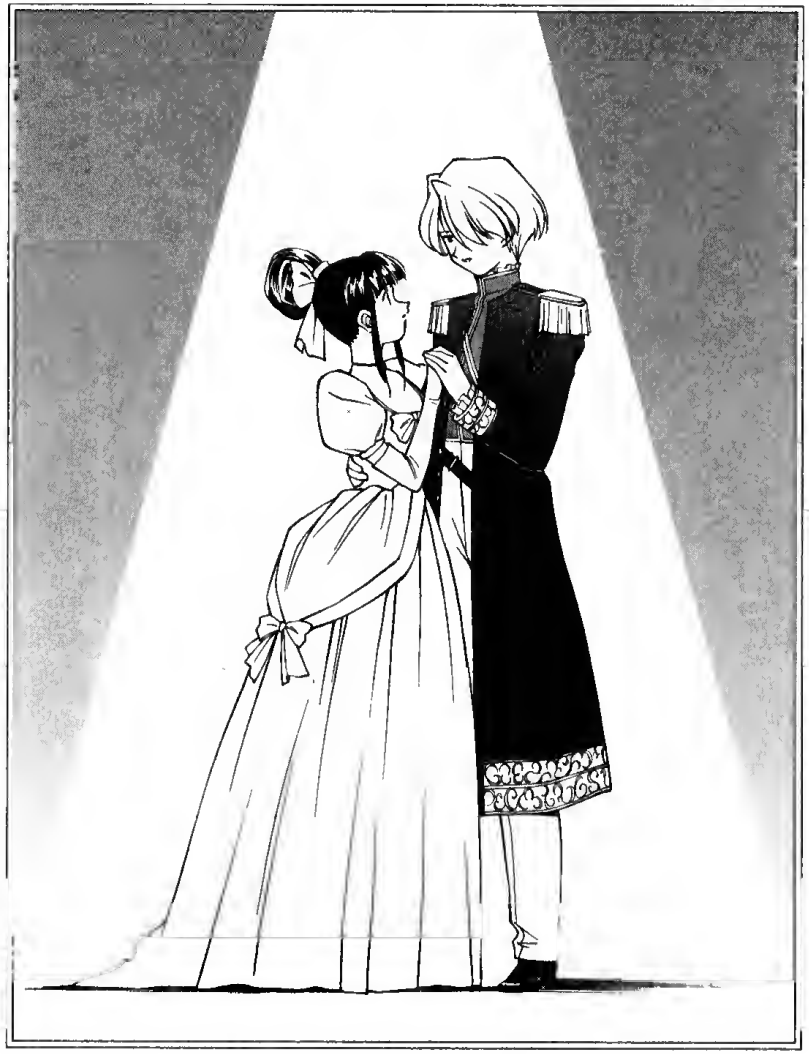
Chapter Fifteen-
The Flower Division
Goes Out!

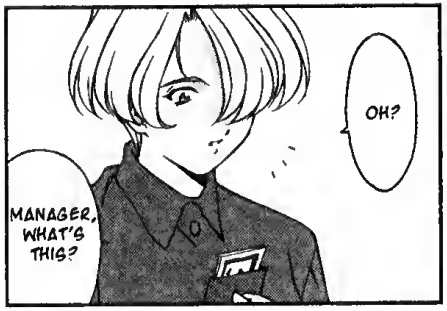

YES, BUT THE HEROINE, SAKURA-SAN, WAS SPLENDID, TOO.
MARIA-SAN WAS WONDERFUL!
IF A GENTLEMAN LIKE THAT APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME, I WOULD SURELY FAINT!

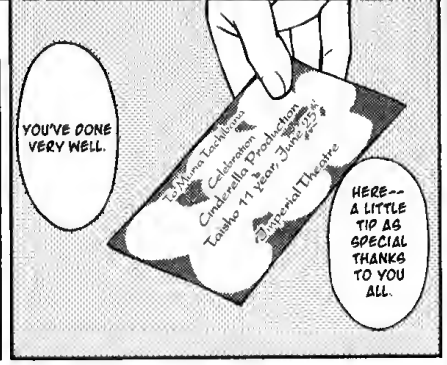
TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCES HAVE ALL ENDED
PLEASE CHECK FOR YOUR BELONGINGS BEFORE LEAVING THE THEATRE.

R-REALLY?
THANK YOU, MARIA-SAN!

NICE PERFORMANCE SAKURA
YOU WERE ESPECIALLY GOOD TONIGHT.
WELL DONE, EVERYONE!




MANAGER, WHAT'S THIS?
OH?


YOU'VE DONE VERY WELL.
To Mina Tachibana
Celebration
Cinderella Production
Taisho 11 year June 25th
Imperial Theatre
HERE-- A LITTLE TIP AS SPECIAL THANKS TO YOU ALL.

WHY DON'T ALL OF YOU GO OUT FOR LUNCH?
TOMORROW'S YOUR DAY OFF.
THAT'S RIGHT!

THANK YOU, YONEDA-HAN!
SO WHILE THIS ISN'T QUITE A BONUS, GO HAVE A NICE MEAL ON US.
YOUR HARD WORK HAS MADE THE CINDERELLA PRODUCTION A HUGE HIT.
WELL...

HOW ABOUT YOU, MARIA-SAN?
I GUESS THAT SOUNDS FINE...
HAVING LUNCH WITH EVERYONE? SOUNDS LOVELY!

COME ON! LET'S GO OUT!
OOOH! THAT'D BE REALLY FUN!

I'VE HEARD THAT THERE ARE PATRONS WHO COME JUST TO WATCH SAKURA-SAN FALL DOWN!
BEING A KLUTZ IS PART OF YOUR CHARM! HA HA HA HA!

SUMIRE, NO TEASING!
YOU EVEN MANAGED TO KEEP FROM TUMBLING DOWN THE STAIRS LIKE YOU USUALLY DO.
INDEED! YOUR PERFORMANCE WAS RATHER MIRACULOUS.

KNOCK.
KNOCK.

YO!
FORGIVE THE INTRUSION.
OH, MANAGER!

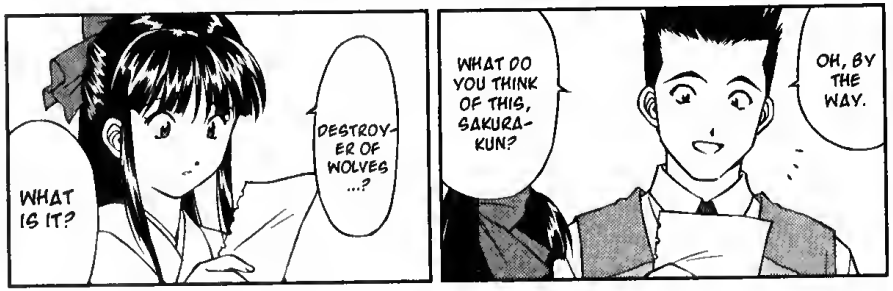
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME, KANNA-SAN!
SAKURA! YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE SURE YOU FALL DOWN THE STEPS PROPERLY IN OUR SHOW THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW!
WELL, IN THAT CASE, YOU'VE LET THOSE PATRONS DOWN TODAY!
Ha ha ha!

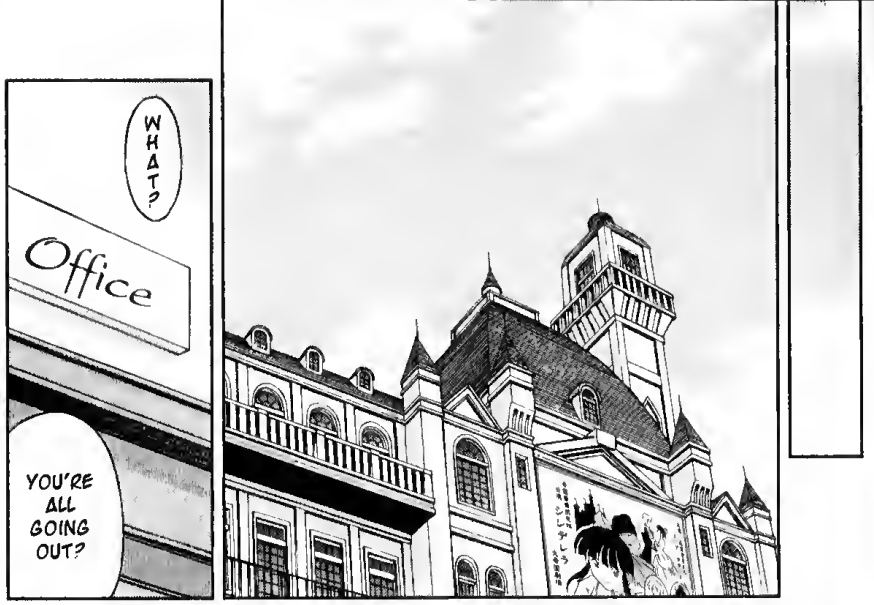
WELL...
PERHAPS I'LL COME ALONG, TOO.
ALL RIGHT, THEN!
WE'LL ALL GO OUT TO GINZA TOMORROW!
YEAH! CAN'T WAIT!

THIS IS GOOD.
HMM. HAS A NICE RING TO IT, AND SOUNDS POWERFUL.
DESTROYER OF WOLVES AND TIGERS, REFRESHING BLADE THAT COUNTERS NUMBNESS!
Lightning
Ogami Special

...I THOUGHT I WOULD INVITE YOU, TOO.
WELL, WE'VE ALL DECIDED TO GO OUT TOGETHER TOMORROW FOR LUNCH, AND...
HEY, SAKURA-KUN.
WHAT'S UP?
OGAMI-SAN?

I SEE.
I GUESS IF YOU HAVE TO WORK...
I HAVE TO GO FETCH THE NEXT SCRIPT FROM MUKOJIMA-SENSEI, THE PLAYWRIGHT.
AHHH... TOO BAD. I HAVE WORK ALREADY.


WHAT IS IT?
DESTROYER OF WOLVES ...?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS, SAKURA-KUN?
OH, BY THE WAY.


WHAT?
Office
YOU'RE ALL GOING OUT?

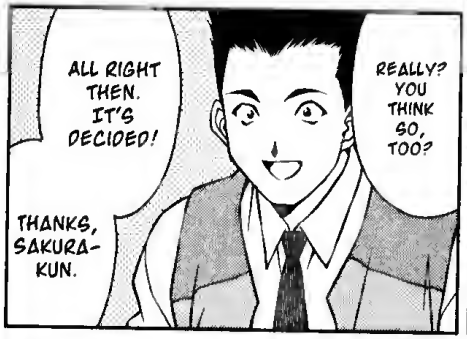
OOOH, I'M SO JEALOUS!
SO, WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE LUNCH?
RESTAURANT ALPS? MATSUKIYA? OR PERHAPS SHISEIDO PARLOR?
OH, I MUST WARN YOU THAT SHISEIDO PARLOR IS QUITE EXPENSIVE!

UH HUH.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME ALONG, KASUMI-SAN AND YURI-SAN?

I'M SORRY, SAKURA-SAN.
I'D REALLY LIKE TO GO, BUT...
...I HAVE SOME WORK I HAVE TO FINISH UP TODAY.

SOUNDS STRONG, I GUESS.
IT'S VERY NICE.

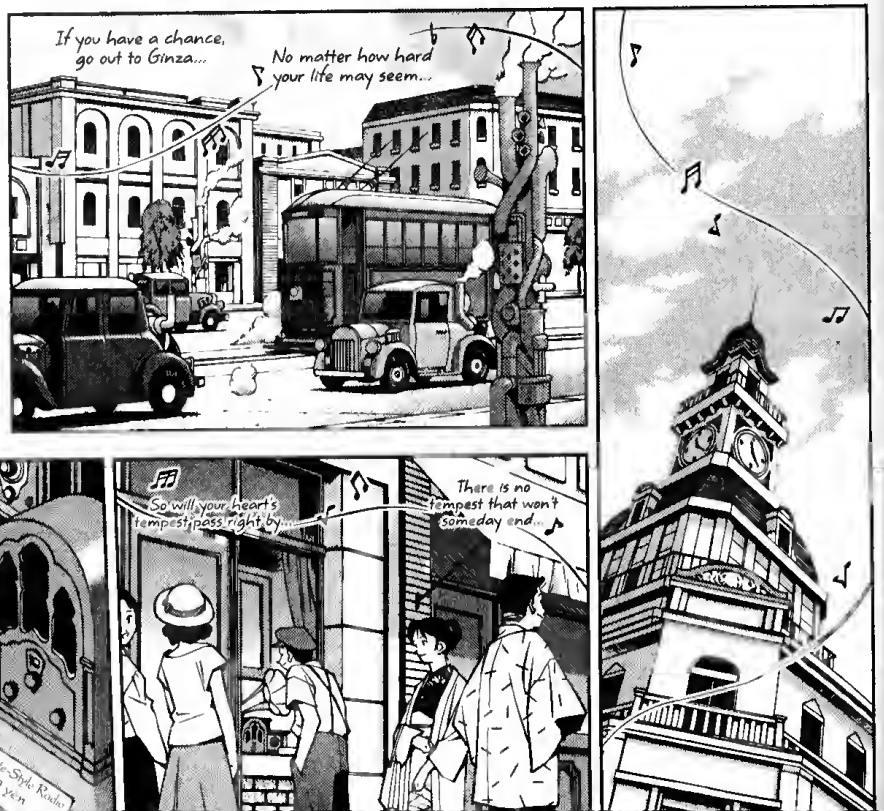
...I USED IT TO STOP SETSUNA. I THOUGHT UP A NAME FOR THE TECHNIQUE
REMEMBER? DURING OUR LAST BATTLE...
UMM.

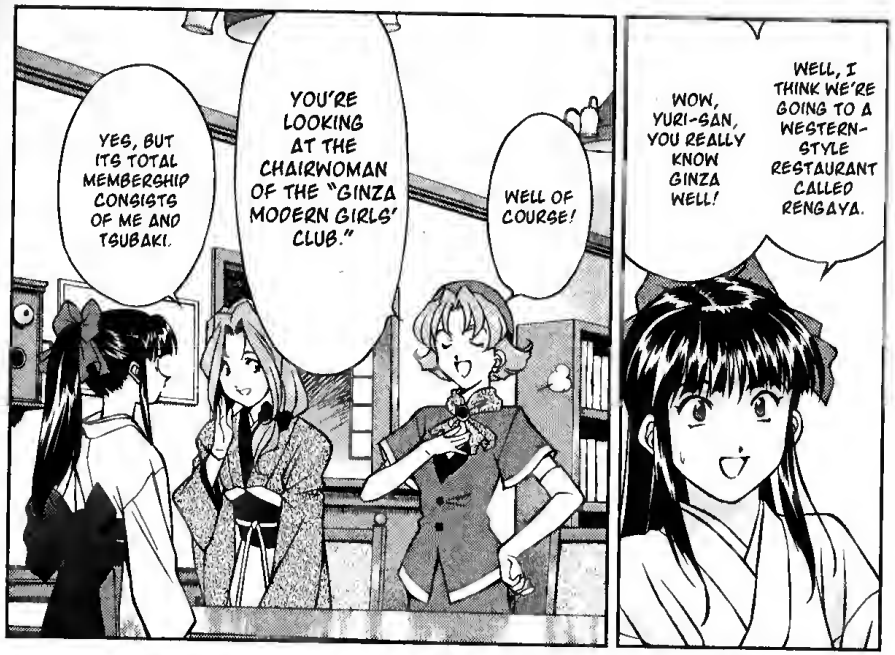

ALL RIGHT THEN. IT'S DECIDED!
REALLY? YOU THINK SO, TOO?
THANKS, SAKURA-KUN.

...YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO NAME THOSE THINGS YOURSELF?
I WONDER IF...

.....

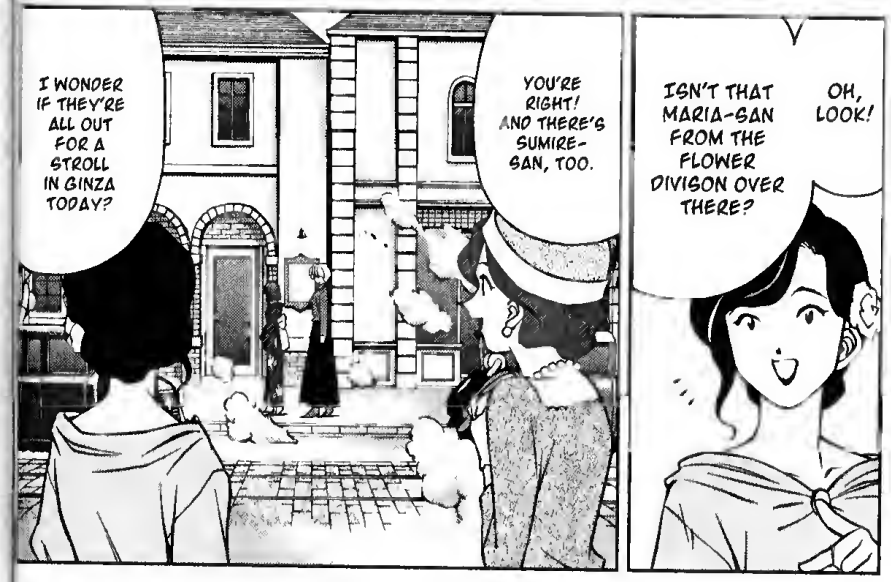
WELL, I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO...
...GO OUT BY OURSELVES.
YES!
LET'S GO!


If you have a chance, go out to Ginza...
No matter how hard your life may seem...
So will your heart's tempest pass right by...
There is no tempest that won't someday end...
Mascle-Style Radio 20 yen


YES, BUT ITS TOTAL MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF ME AND TSUBAKI.
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE CHAIRWOMAN OF THE "GINZA MODERN GIRLS' CLUB."
WELL OF COURSE!
WOW, YURI-SAN, YOU REALLY KNOW GINZA WELL!
WELL, I THINK WE'RE GOING TO A WESTERN-STYLE RESTAURANT CALLED RENGAYA.

NO, IT SEEMS THAT EVERYBODY ELSE IS BUSY.
ARE THEY COMING, SAKURA?
SLAM

LOOK, THE STREETS ARE SMILING AT YOU!
ALWAYS WITH KINDNESS.
LET'S GO FORTH AND BE CHEERFUL!
THIS IS GINZA...
LOVELY GINZA...
LET'S WALK WITH OUR BACKS STRAIGHT!
CHEST FORWARD, STATELY AND DIGNIFIED!


I WONDER IF THEY'RE ALL OUT FOR A STROLL IN GINZA TODAY?
YOU'RE RIGHT! AND THERE'S SUMIRE-SAN, TOO.
OH, LOOK!
ISN'T THAT MARIA-SAN FROM THE FLOWER DIVISON OVER THERE?

YOU KNOW WE'RE HAVING LUNCH IN A MINUTE, KANNA-HAN.
WHEN YOU'RE IN GINZA, YOU CAN'T MISS KIMURAYA'S AN-PAN!

WOW, LOOK AT THAT, IRIS!
WHAT A WONDERFUL DRESS!
MADE IN FRANCE, SAKURA.
IT'S A DRESS FROM MY COUNTRY!

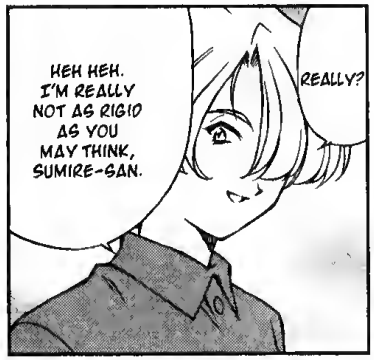
Thanks, but no thanks.
You want some, Kohran?

THIS WILL BE A NICE BREAK FOR US.
IT'S A LOVELY DAY...
EVERYONE'S HAVING SO MUCH FUN.

DOESN'T SAKURA-SAN LOOK JUST LIKE A TOURIST?
LOOK AT THEM ALL. THEY'RE SO EXCITED.
OH HO HO HO HO!

WOW!
THIS RICE OMELET IS INCREDIBLE!
RENGATEI

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE ORDERED IT, TOO.
OH REALLY?
COMMONER'S FOOD IS NICE SOMETIMES, YOU KNOW.
PORK CUTLET AND RICE ARE THIS RESTAURANT'S SPECIALTY.

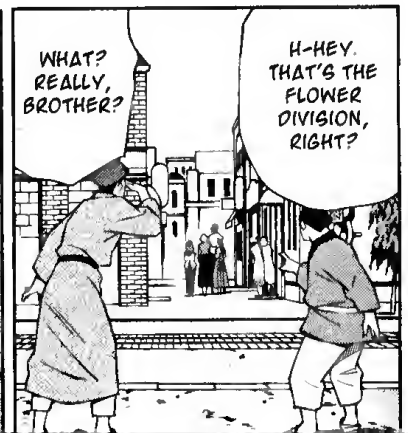

HEH HEH. I'M REALLY NOT AS RIGID AS YOU MAY THINK, SUMIRE-SAN.
REALLY?

YOU ALWAYS SPEND YOUR OFF-DAYS WORKING OUT ON YOUR OWN.
BUT... I'M A BIT SURPRISED THAT YOU CAME ALONG, MARIA-SAN.

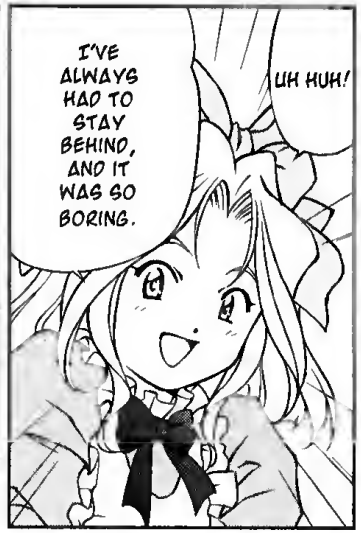
SORRY! WE'RE COMING!

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU? WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE YOU BEHIND!
MARIA-SAN, SUMIRE-SAN!

I WONDER WHERE THEY'RE ALL GOING TOGETHER?
WE'RE LUCKY TO GET A GLIMPSE OF SUCH STARS IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!
YOU'RE RIGHT.

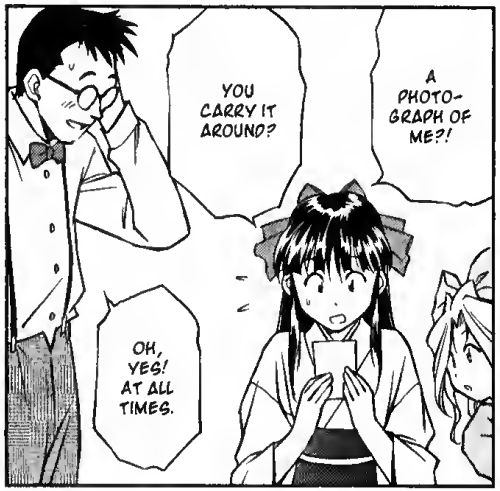

WHAT? REALLY, BROTHER?
H-HEY. THAT'S THE FLOWER DIVISION, RIGHT?

YOU'RE SO BRAVE.
Fight! Go!
WHEN ONII-CHAN GETS IN A BIND, I'M GOING TO HELP HIM.

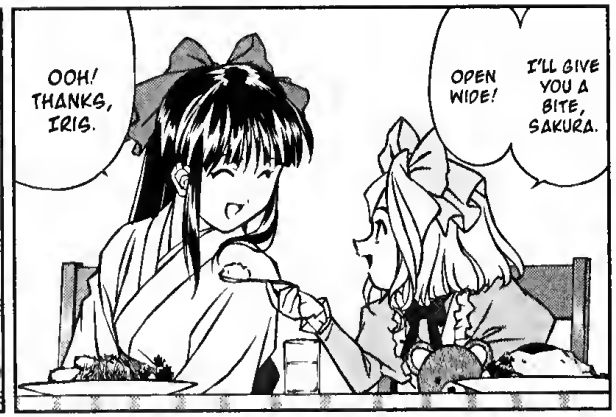

I'VE ALWAYS HAD TO STAY BEHIND, AND IT WAS SO BORING.
UH HUH!

COULD I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
UM! I'M A HUGE FAN OF YOURS.

...AREN'T YOU SAKURA SHINGUJI-SAN OF THE IMPERIAL THEATER TROUPE?
UMM... PARDON ME, BUT...
YES?


YOU CARRY IT AROUND?
A PHOTO-GRAPH OF ME?!
OH, YES! AT ALL TIMES.

YOU'RE RIGHT! THE EGG IS SO LIGHT AND FLUFFY. DELICIOUS!
!


OOH! THANKS, IRIS.
OPEN WIDE!
I'LL GIVE YOU A BITE, SAKURA.

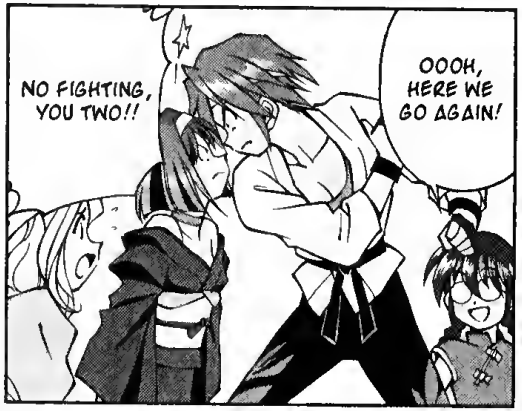
...GOING THROUGH FINAL ADJUSTMENTS AND WILL BE DELIVERED TO GINZA HEADQUARTERS SOON.
I MEAN... YOUR WHATCHA-MACALLIT WILL BE...
REALLY?
WAI!

KANNA-HAN, YOU'RE GOING OVER-BUDGET.
WILL YOU ADD AN ORDER OF OMELET RICE FOR ME?
IS IT THAT GOOD?

ARE YOU REALLY THAT EXCITED, IRIS?
HUH?

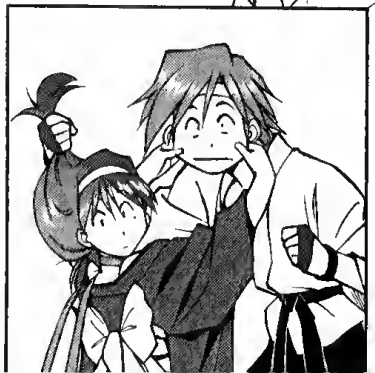
KOHRAN.
OOPS.
...YOUR KO--
BY THE WAY, IRIS.
I RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE FLOWER MANSION THIS MORNING...

YOU GORILLA WOMAN!!
YOU-YOU... HOW DARE YOU...?
IT'S A PERFECT NICKNAME FOR YOU, I THINK. CACTUS WOMAN!
WELL, YOU'RE ALWAYS SO PRICKLY, YA KNOW?
ガヨ


NO FIGHTING, YOU TWO!!
OOOH, HERE WE GO AGAIN!

YOU HEARD ME!
WANNA SAY THAT AGAIN?!

.....



IT'S LIKE I'M A STAR OR SOMETHING.
SOMEONE WANTED MY AUTOGRAPH.

I SEE.
JUST WRITE YOUR NAME LIKE YOU WOULD NORMALLY, SAKURA.

I'VE NEVER SIGNED ANYTHING...
WHAT DO I DO?

I SUPPOSE THERE ARE PHILANTHROPIC PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.
WHAT A SURPRISE. SAKURA-SAN HAS A FAN?

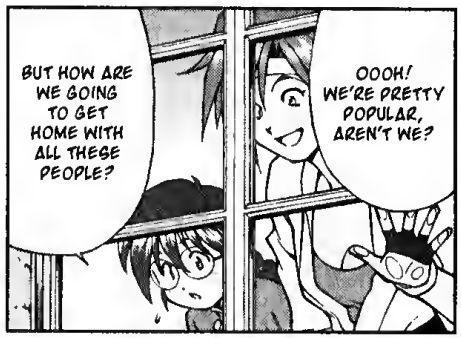
I'LL TREASURE IT!
THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!
YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME.

JUST WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, KANNA-SAN?!
EXCUSE ME?
THE CACTUS WOMAN IS GETTING JEALOUS.
WATCH IT, SAKURA.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?
WE'VE BEEN SURROUNDED BY FANS.

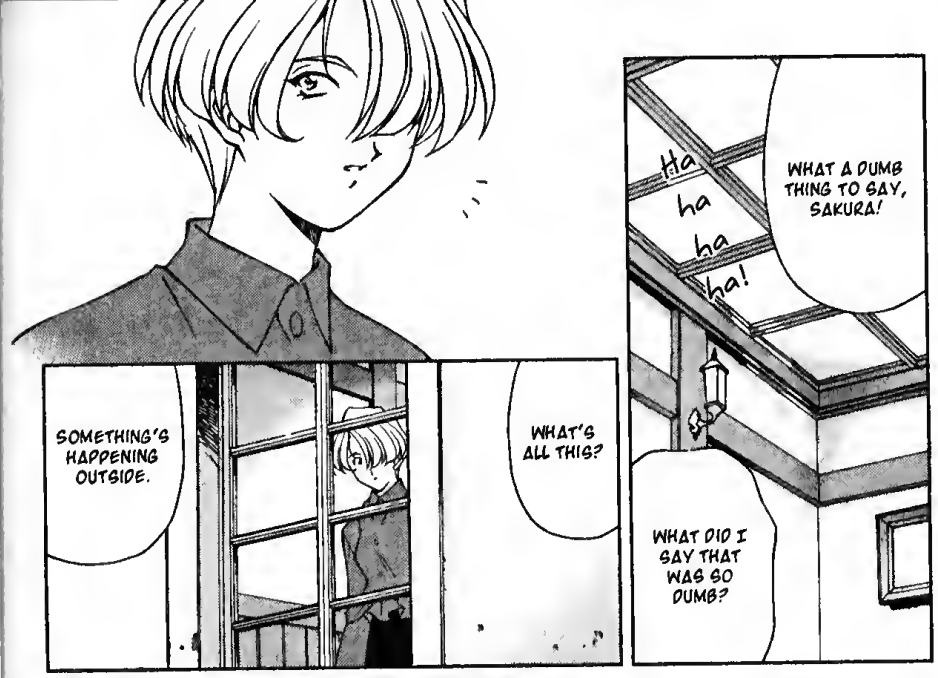
Kyaaa!
Kyaa!

I CAN TELEPORT MYSELF OUT!
ひそ ひそ
I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO SNEAK OUT THE BACK.


BUT HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET HOME WITH ALL THESE PEOPLE?
OOOH! WE'RE PRETTY POPULAR, AREN'T WE?

THERE'S NO REASON TO RUN AWAY.
THOSE FANS HAVE COME HERE TO SEE US!

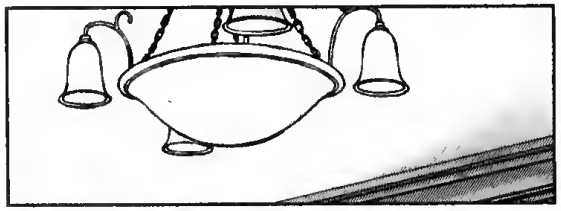
SNEAK AWAY? SURELY YOU JEST!
OH HO HO HO!
Sumire-sama! Sumire-san!


SOMETHING'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE.
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
Ha ha ha ha!
WHAT A DUMB THING TO SAY, SAKURA!
WHAT DID I SAY THAT WAS SO DUMB?

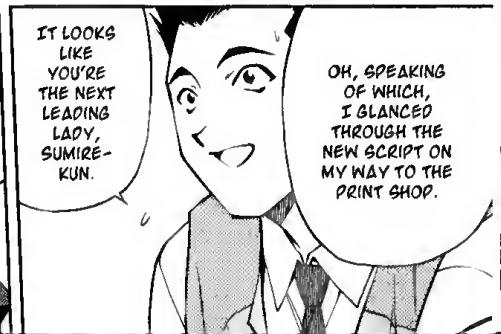
KYAAA! SHE'S GORGEOUS!
IT'S MARIA-SAN!
?

ざわ
ざわ

OH HO HO HO!
IT SHALL BE THE REVIVAL OF THE GOLDEN COUPLE, MARIA-SAN AND MYSELF!
I'M ALREADY LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!
WELL, BUT...
...YOU'RE PARTNERED WITH KANNA, NOT MARIA.
SIGH!



Sakura Taisen 4—End of Performance


IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE NEXT LEADING LADY, SUMIRE-KUN.
OH, SPEAKING OF WHICH, I GLANCED THROUGH THE NEW SCRIPT ON MY WAY TO THE PRINT SHOP.

帝　国　華　撃　団

Imperial Fighting Troupe

T　E　I　G　E　K　I

Maria Tachibana

マリア・タチバナ

At the same time, the celebrity wanna-be Ueda yelled, "I want to hold the next release exhibit on top of Tokyo Tower!" as he danced around. "Mars Fighting Troupe! This is the next big thing!"
Akahori showed up pedaling his Mercedes Benz tricycle.
Behind him, the bottom feeders of RED [his company] are playing around with cherry blossoms flakes for the stage.
They're all idiots.
But this is my daily life.
"Nomura-san is here." Kanako, the secretary came flying in. She really flies.
Apparently she was born in India and did yoga all her life, and she actually flies about 20 cm off the ground. Whether this is actually useful is unclear.
"Show him in."
"Okay."
By the time Kanako answered, Nomura had already made his way into the room.
"Hey, Hiroi-sensei! This is really good! This beginning right here!" He swings the manuscript excitedly.
Whether it's good or bad, it's just following the game plot, idiot.
"I'd like you to continue in the same way, and do ten chapters this month!"
You think it's so easy, you idiot?!
As I the thought crossed my head, I said coolly, "Is that so? But I can't. I have other work to do."
"So, you haven't had enough, huh?"
Nomura said with a grin. It was an eerie smile. His eyes behind his glasses weren't smiling.
"What the hell do you mean?!"
The tone was a bit strong.
"Look at this." He took out some raw manuscripts from the envelope he had been holding.
The drawings were beautiful.
"What? Already?"
I was lost for words. The manga was ready only one week after I submitted the original story script?
"See this is Chapter One, and here is the draft of Chapter Two. These is the lines for Chapter Three. Quick, don't you think? Masa-sensei is great, right? That's why we need Hiroi-sensei's original story quickly."
"But isn't Magazine Z a monthly?"
"It's a monthly made at the pace of a weekly."
What the hell is that?!
"I can't write at that kind of pace!"
"Oh, oooh! You shouldn't talk to the Editor-in-Charge at Kodansha like that. No you shouldn't!"
"Shut up, you idiot. You're a weirdo!"
"Y-you... You called me a weirdo, didn't you!?"
Nomura's face was bright red.
Crap. I called a true weirdo a weirdo.

The staff was arguing over whether or not to put sugar in buckwheat tea.
"Of course you add sugar!"
That's how I drank it, ever since I was a child. At least around Mukojima, in the old part of Tokyo where I grew up.
As she put sugar in the tea, the beautiful secretary Kanako said, "How nice it was that you were released."
"You know, you shouldn't be glad that I was released from Siberia, but that I was able to submit Sakura's original manga manuscript!" I slapped her with my slipper.
"I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Kanako apologized repeatedly as she spilled sugar all over the floor.
"If apologies were enough, we wouldn't need the police!" I wanted to tell her, but I restrained myself. I was proud that I had grown up so much.
But what gets me mad is that Editor-In-Charge Nomura, who sent in Kodansha's Siberian Special Correspondent. No matter how blocked a writer is, is there really a need to lock them up in Siberia? I do want to see that Reiko Isomura again, however.
While confined in snowy Siberia, I managed to write three chapters of Sakura Taisen's original manga story. While I was sharpening my trusty Mitsubishi pencil to start writing the fourth chapter, I smelled that sweet scent and lost consciousness.
It was just a short while, or maybe it was long, but when I came to, I was back in my bed at home.

I had been released from Siberia.

When I looked at my cell phone, the date showed it was June. I had been in Siberia for a month and a half.
It took one week to get back into the daily routine.
"How about a giant panel for the poster this time?" the dinosaur-brained Okumura came running with the poster and fell, unable to endure the weight of the paper.

Fourth Installment

Cherry Blossoms Flourish in Otowa

By Ohji Hiroi

Iris and I

"I'm still a kid." I used to say. When I was a little girl, people often thought I was older than I actually was. Perhaps it was because in addition to being an honor student, I was big for my age. I was mistaken for a junior-high student when I was in second grade! I had always yearned to be the small, cute, innocent little girl. So, yes! Iris-chan, after she arrives in the Capital, is the ideal image I had as a child!! To play the ideal person, not only in the world of audio, but on stage with my entire body is my childhood dreams come true. I feel very, very lucky.

But on stage, I feel so full of gaps between me and Iris! There are so many hurdles that I simply cannot overcome!! The face, nationality, age, and above all the height! The only things we share are the voice and blood type. For that reason, I want our souls to be close together. If that happens, I believe there will be magic on stage. The magic of imagination! By reading this manga, I think Iris and I have become a little closer in spirit. And this summer in our music show, the magic will be even greater.

Kumiko Nishihara
playing
Iris

There are things that shouldn't be uttered in this world. There are many instances in which truth should not be said.
"I'll remember this! Y-you...This is war!"
"Huh?"
So now he's talking "war"? He's way past weirdo; he's a true moron.
"Nat 'huh?' It's definitely war. It's Kodansha V.S. RED."
"It's not V.S.; it's versus."
"Wha cares! It's war. It's war! Ah ha ha ha!"
Nomura left, excited.
I was exhausted.
I wanted very much to see Reiko. I wanted to be confined in Siberia.

Two hours later...
Accounting Department Manager Yoshida came running in. "It's terrible!" she said.
Yoshida says that she is related to the former Japanese Prime Minister Yashida, but that's a lie. She has a tendency to lie. Sametime aga, she said, "I'm going to marry into an Arab Royal Family," but we never heard her mention A far Arab since. Her lies are always a transitory thing.
"The bank has ceased all transactions with us! We can't pay aur workers!"
What is the fun in saying such lies? I sighed.
"It's true! What shall I da?"
"There is no way that the banks would stop all transactian."
My uncle had been the Chairman of the Board of a credit association. He was the one that referred me to my bank, and we've had a good relationship for 25 years. There is no way that they would stop all transactions on me. It's not that kind of a relationship.
"Please call the president of the bank."
"For sure?"
"How can I kid about something like this?! Transactians have been ceased! RED will be destroyed!"
I called the bank immediately. President "Nukakugi" was out. The section chief in charge af RED is out, tao. I tried ta ask what had happened, but the banker on the phone is nat talking clearly. It's as if he's gat samething stuck in the back of his teeth.
"We've done some investigatians an RED-sama's latest performances, and well, upper management has decided that for the time being we wauld like to stop all dealings..."
"What the... That's nonsense! Get me the president!"
Though narmally mild-mannered, I was yelling.
The bank hung up the phone.
At that very moment I remembered Nomura's voice: "It's true. It's war!"
"Call Kodansha NOW!!"
I was screaming with all my might.

To be continued in the next volume.

ハピネス
ハピネス
ハピネス
ハピネス
YEAH!
...ASK ABOUT MISTAKES...
YEAH!
THAT'S WHY WE DON'T...